

"UNDERSTANDEST THOU WHAT THOU READEST?"

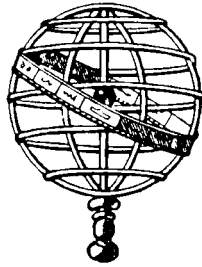
THE  KEY

TO
SCRIPTURAL INTERPRETATION

BY
L. J. COPPIN

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EMORY UNIVERSITY

THE KEY

—TO—

Scriptural Interpretation,

OR,

Expository Notes on Obscure Passages.

By Rev. L. J. COPPIN,

Author of "The Sunday School, Its Work, and How to Do It."

"In Memoriam, Katie S. Campbell Beckett."

"The Relation of Baptized Children to the Church."

—O—

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CONTENTS

Dedicatory

Introduction—Rev. J. C. Embry, D.D.

I.—General Observations, page,.....	1
II.—Practice in Bible Reading: “But Many that are first shall be last; and the last first.”	14
III.—Sin against the Holy Ghost.....	23
IV.—The Burning Bush.....	35
V.—Melchizedek.....	46
VI.—The Revelation of St. John the Divine.....	57
VII.—Books of the Old Testament.....	110
VIII.—Intermediate History.....	155
IX.—Books of the New Testament.....	176
Summary.....	208

DEDICATORY.

To my dear mother JANE COPPIN, who taught me the Scriptures in childhood; to my loving wife, FANNY JACKSON COPPIN, to whom I am so largely indebted for the measure of success that I have had in the ministry; and to my kind professor, DR. EDWARD T. BARTLETT, whom I hold in grateful remembrance for special help and encouragement during my three years' course at the Divinity School this humble effort is most affectionately dedicated; with the sincere hope that it may be helpful to some who are seeking for more light upon the Holy Scriptures.

THE AUTHOR.

INTRODUCTION.

I can scarcely think of anything more desirable or useful than a good book. Yet it must be said that of the millions of books that issue from the press all over the civilized world, and that crowd the marts of trade, it is not by any means so easy as one would suppose to get hold of a really good book. And this is true, whether you are in search for a book of History, Biography, Science or Religion. But when we look for special helps to the study of the Holy Scriptures, we may search, and invest our money fifty times, and yet fail in finding what we want. In this most valuable little work of my good friend and co-laborer, Dr. Coppin, of which these humble lines are designed to form a sort of vestibule, we meet with a very happy title, "*A Key to the Interpretation of Obscure Passages of the Bible; or, the Bible Self-Interpreted.*"

We can easily imagine a whole troop of such passages coming up to the mind of the earnest Bible reader, as soon as he has seen this title. Hence, the first question that would arise in his mind would be: "I wonder if the contents of this book justifies the promise of the title?" "If so, it is just the thing I have often been looking for, and no reasonable price shall hinder me from owning it." Now, then, so far as this introduction is concerned, this question is the one at issue: "Does the contents of the book justify its title?"

I.—To indicate the impression which a perusal of the manuscript made on my mind, I need but to say the title itself was suggested in part,

to the author, as the result. I have been a student of the precious volume for more than five and forty years, during which time I have had the help of the great luminaries of Biblical exegesis, as Wesley, Watson, Flavel, Smith, Clarke, Hodge, Shedd, Benson, Ralston, Boyce and the great Cyclopædias and yet there stands out a host of obscurities, minor and major, before the memory, requiring further light to make them plain. It is not claimed for this book that it explains everything, for such a claim would be foolish exaggeration. The Bible will not be fully and entirely explained until the end of time. Still, as the glory of the day increases light on the ever living Word, until the full glory of evangelic noon. We claim for this book a special value of its own. Adopting a method somewhat analogous to that of Hitchcock in the analysis of the Bible, our author leads us from passage to passage with singular facility; explaining at each step, most lucidly, the new problem he has undertaken. A hard student of the Bible, a born Exegete, our author's natural fondness for didactics looks out on every page. And right well does he "teach" us how to read our Bible!

II.—The conception of the work is a new thought amongst us in the matter of book-making. It takes us up out of the commonplace in thinking and discussion, leading us away to contemplate themes that are general and universal. Happy day for us when a deepening, broadening culture shall

lead us more away from the recent dark, narrow past, that concerns the *clan*, to the fountain head of those streams whence have flowed the history and destinies, not of the *Negro*, but of the *human* race. The half-awakened intelligence of the little child concerns itself about things which lie within a very narrow circle, but as we ascend to manhood we look abroad on ever widening fields, until having reached the pleasant heights of a full-orbed endowment, the sweep of the outlook embraces all the poles, and all the hemispheres of our globe.

It may be, indeed, that the pioneers along this highway of progress may have less applause and frothy praise, because only half understood; but it is certain that God will reward with a full measure the faithful soul that has sought for wisdom and understanding, and who has labored to spread the knowledge of the glory of God in the earth, "as the waters cover the sea." In this sense, how wide the meaning of the question at the opening of this little book: "Understandest thou what thou readest?" There be those among us who are ever shouting, Race! Race!! Race!!!, and have a considerable multitude wild, as if seized with frenzy—and this without either speaker or hearer comprehending the deeper meaning of the word. This word—radix, root—whence Race is generic, and although degraded by a narrow use in these slaveholding times when men are taught to despise their fellows—it is worthy of a noble place in all litera-

ture, philosophy and poetry, as the heritage of the whole family of man.

This book is a race book in the highest sense, in that it seeks to exalt Him "in whom the whole family in earth and heaven is named," and whose blood

"Atoned for all our race,

And sprinkles now the throne of grace."

May this "Key" be found in the hands of thousands who seek to understand the Word of Life.

J. C. EMBRY.

South Philadelphia, July 25th, 1895.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

“Understandest thou what thou readest?” (Acts viii., 30). The Ethiopian eunuch had charge of all the precious treasures of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, and was of great authority, but he was not in possession of the true riches. He could not say with David, “The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple” (Psalms xix., 7). Yet he was earnestly seeking for light. So must every one who would come to the light. Next to the personal desire is the personal effort. The great evangelical prophet lifts up his voice in trumpet tones, and calls aloud to the man who thirsts; then, without wasting any time in explaining the nature of thirst, or the final result of an unquenched thirst, or by giving an analysis of the material by which thirst is quenched, he extends an invitation to the thirsty man, “Come ye to the

waters" Come! (Isaiah lv., 1). When once the consent of the mind is had to seek for light and truth, somehow, the help comes. In the case of the Ethiopian whom we have taken as our model in these introductory lines, these two fundamental conditions were met. The desire was felt, the effort was put forth. What more? The earnest seeker gives a very suggestive answer to Philip, who propounded the question: "Understandest thou what thou readest?" "How can I," said he, "except some man should guide me." It is with the hope of guiding some earnest seeker after Scriptural truth that this task is undertaken by the writer. There are passages of Scripture that are susceptible of various interpretations; they are intended to throw light on various subjects, or, upon various phases of the same subject. For instance, the parable of the talents, Matthew xxv, 14-30. Literally, the talents refer to goods; he "called his own servants and delivered unto them his goods," especially money: "thou oughtest, therefore, to have put my money to the exchangers." But we may, with equal propriety, compare the talents to a good physical endowment. Of those to whom God has given

much strength of body, He has a right to require much work. Or, talents may be compared to intellectual endowment, and where much is given much is required; or, in a general way, talents may be called opportunities.

Again, there are passages of Scripture that are specific in their meaning, and, therefore, susceptible of but one interpretation. The intelligent student of the Bible learns how to distinguish between those passages that are general and those that are specific. He gets hold of the key of scriptural interpretation and unlocks many passages that otherwise might have ever remained to him obscure. "Therefore, every scribe which is instructed into the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." Generally, the Scriptures interpret themselves; in other words, one Scripture interprets another. The method of interpreting the Scriptures by the Scriptures is, after all, the surest way to get the meaning intended, and is the method best adapted to the average reader.

Commentaries and other helps have their legitimate place, but it is feared that their constant, or even frequent use, is a hindrance,

instead of a help. Commentators often indulge in wild speculations; and sometimes upon passages that evidently have a specific meaning, we have many different opinions expressed. The surest way to true interpretation is to find out the mind of the writer of any given passage; what is *evidently* meant. This can sometimes be done by simply reading the passage over and over again until the trend of thought becomes clear. Sometimes, what is said, seems veiled in mystery, until parallel passages are brought into comparison. The accounts that are given by biblical writers on certain subjects, are often fragmentary, and in order to a better understanding, the different accounts must be brought together and compared. Each may state a different phase of the same subject, but all, being brought together, make a complete whole. This idea obtains both with regard to the different sections of the Bible and also with regard to the Bible as a whole. In the Pentateuch, that is, the first five books of the Bible—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, there is much of repetition. Primarily the subjects treated in those various books are: Genesis: generation; origin; the beginning of all

things. Exodus: going out; the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt. Leviticus: the laws and regulations governing the priests and Levites; also those concerning the ceremonial law Numbers: the numbering of the Israelites. Deuteronomy: the second law.

The subjects that we have given, are those that are dealt with principally in these books respectively. But in the abundance of details, they sometimes overlap. For instance, Leviticus describes the ministry of the Levites; but even a more detailed account is given in Numbers. Another case in point: in three books of the Pentateuch, there are six different accounts of the "Passover" and "Feast of unleavened bread," as follows: Exodus xii, 1-28; xiii 3-10; xxiii 15; xxxiv 18; Leviticus xxiii 5-14 and Deut. xvi 1-17. Slightly different statements from different writers upon the same subject, have led some to conclude that certain passages of the Bible contradict others. Those who reach such a conclusion are mistaken. Often the very passages which they consider contradictory, are needed to throw a fuller light on the subject. One who has no system in the study of the Bible, is liable to be misled; and

those who depend entirely or principally upon commentaries will become confused when two or more authors give different interpretations to the same passage.

HIGHER CRITICISM.

It may be of interest to call attention in a few words to this department of Bible study. The best authority that we have for Higher Criticism, truly so-called, is found in the words spoken by our Lord, St. John v. 39: "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me." The persons to whom He was speaking believed intensely enough in the Scriptures, but their method of interpretation was so literal and artificial that the very thing which should have been to them a source of light, blinded their eyes; so much so that they rejected the Messiah for whom they looked. But the Divine One did not institute for them a new means of discovering Him. The Scriptures, He said, "testify of Me." And so they were bidden to return to the same source of authority and inquire again. Indeed, criticism in its best sense, is an inquiry—an investigation. Why should it be thought irreverent or sacrilegious to examine the Scrip-

tures and become intelligently informed concerning them? The Scriptures are a revelation to rational beings; the salvation which they offer is offered upon the condition of faith and obedience; but faith itself is based upon knowledge, and the more knowledge, the better.

Many who are rather unfortunately called higher critics seem bent upon rejecting the Bible as a Divine revelation. The first effort, however, is not to do away with the sacred writings entirely, but to so mutilate them as to leave but little of what its supporters hold dear, or, in the language of Dr. William R. Harper, "they leave only a few harmless stories; a few well-meant but mistaken warnings; a few dead songs; many unfulfilled predictions; a large amount of fairly good literature." Those who are observing closely the work of the rationalistic schools, must have discovered that their supporters are men who command a hearing, and that it will therefore be useless for the friends of the Bible to remain silent, in the belief that its enemies are utterly incapable of doing it any harm. They are, for the most part, men of great learning, and they proceed at their work with consummate skill. They take those passages of the

Bible that are the most difficult to understand, and hold out what they call their imperfections. They are fond of dealing with authorship, and chronological statements. Their choice fields of battle are the Pentateuch, the Psalms and various historical statements found elsewhere. The seeming contradictions of the Bible are magnified, and those portions which can only be understood in the light of a Divine revelation, are ruled out. Any indisposition on the part of the friends of the Bible to meet them on their chosen ground and fight them squarely, is construed as fear and cowardice. It will be well to remember, also, that those who give the most attention to the doctrines of these so-called higher critics, are not the persons who are rooted and grounded in orthodox belief, but those who are either of a skeptical bent of mind, or those who have no settled convictions, but claim to be seekers after truth. The business of Christians is to make disciples, and as some will not be persuaded until they have seen both sides of a question, and as the rationalists are so active in showing their side, the Christian believer will be recreant to duty unless he be found ready and willing to defend his cause.

In preparing a work for general reading and for practical use, we have not deemed it necessary to deal with the original text; but taking the English Bible as we have it either in the authorized edition or the new version, to make some practical suggestions as to how the Bible should be studied and interpreted.

First of all, we desire to call attention to a fact that seems often to be forgotten, viz., that the Bible really has a human as well as a Divine element. We are not to think of the Bible as something that dropped from the Divine hand, and that has not been subject to human handling. Holy men wrote the Bible, and they were divinely inspired, and therefore fitted for this especial work; but they were men—real human beings.

They did not wait for every detail of Scripture to be mysteriously, or miraculously given to them, but they proceeded as historians. In many instances they were eye-witnesses of what they wrote, and in many other instances they recorded circumstances that happened many years previous. In such cases, they were aided both by tradition and documentary evidence; of this latter there was an abundant supply, and

their work was to cull from the whole that which was true, and of such documents, those which gave the best account. It may be difficult, if not impossible, to find a modern scholar who will contend that the Pentateuch is the work of a single author, if by author is meant the person who actually wrote the books. That one man edited those books, and that that man was Moses, most critics agree. But the various accounts of one and the same subject within the limits of one book or a group of books by the same author, seem to be very clear evidence that the book or group is a compilation of various documents. This by no means invalidates the book. The thing aimed at is a true narrative, and abstracts from various authors do not destroy the genuineness of a book. In selecting the documents that were used, the author had to aid him, both Divine guidance and the historical tests to which the documents were subjected.

But the serious mistake that the higher critics often make is, they attempt to rule out that portion of the Bible that is purely Divine, and thus make it simply a human production and consequently full of errors. Fortunately, the world is not dependent upon human opinion or

human reasoning to vindicate the claims of the Bible of a Divine origin. There has been an age of polemics, and that age did its perfect work. Every possible objection that could be made to the Bible as being the Word of God, and to the position that was taken by believers, was made. Those objections were not evaded, but were squarely and honestly met. Some were vindicated on the spot and others were left for time to vindicate; and it is the humble boast of Christian believers to-day, that every test to which the Bible has been subjected has but served to vindicate its claims.

As a matter of convenience, and for the purpose of making the Divine Word as clear as possible, the Bible is divided into chapters, paragraphs, and verses; and by the science of language certain marks are used to indicate the manner in which the voice is to be used to show the trend of thought in each and every portion.

A subject may continue throughout a chapter, or even run from chapter to chapter; or it may end with a paragraph. It sometimes happens, also, that a paragraph does not denote the beginning of a new subject, but only a different phase of the same subject.

For example, beginning with the third verse of Matthew xxiv, the disciples came to our Lord and asked Him to interpret the words which He had a short time before spoken, and which are recorded in the second verse of said chapter. The Lord granted their request, and His explanation runs through the balance of Chapter xxiv, and all of Chapter xxv. He speaks of false Christs and false prophets who should try to deceive them by naming a day when His second coming should occur. He speaks of wars and political commotions which they might be led to erroneously interpret as foreboding His speedy coming. He bids them to rely upon no visible or external sign, but to watch; that is, to be ready at all times.

Then He gives—in Chapter xxv—the parables of the ten virgins, and the nobleman who went on a journey and let out his goods to his servants. The chapter closes with a setting forth of how the Son of Man shall deal with those who are living upon the earth at the time of His second coming. This discourse is divided into two chapters and into many paragraphs, but it is the same discourse continued. It also occurs that a whole book is employed with one subject, as, for instance, Esther, Job and Jude. Sometimes several books

are employed to represent a certain period; for instance, Ezra, Nehemiah, Zechariah and Haggai.

As the most instructive and beneficial way of reading the Bible, I would recommend the topical method. Begin with a certain book, read to the end of the topic under consideration, whether contained in part of a chapter, a whole chapter, or several chapters. Then return and make a study of the topic, first by the use of parallel passages and quotations, and then by history and commentaries which throw light upon the subject.

CHAPTER II.

PRACTICE IN BIBLE READING.

“But many that are first shall be last; and the last, first.” Mark x, 31.

This is a familiar passage, and one that has been the occasion of much speculation. Some have decided that it meant one thing, and some another. The Jews have been referred to as “the first,” and the Gentiles as “the last.” Some have concluded that it refers to the different races or nations; that those who at one time were first among the civilized nations, have suffered a reversion, and become last. What does the passage really mean? Is there any method of interpretation for this and kindred passages, that will give the primary meaning, at least, beyond a doubt?

First of all, be sure that the passage is quoted correctly. A misquotation leads to a false inter-

pretation. We almost invariably say: "The first shall be last, and the last first," and conclude, that by some kind of Divine arrangement, all who are first must eventually take a back seat and become last. The correct reading is: "But *many* that are first shall be last." *Many*, not necessarily *all*. The language is not intended to establish a rule, but to declare a possibility. In Matthew xx, 16, we do have the words: "The last shall be first and the first, last," but it is preceded by the word "so," used here as a conjunction connecting the thought with what has gone before. It is equivalent to saying; things being thus, the first shall be last, and the last first; or, in such a case, the first becomes last and the last first.

But what gave rise to the conversation that ended in these words which we have quoted in Mark x, 31? The record of the circumstances begins Mark x, 17. As Jesus was going forth, there came to him a person and said: "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Our Lord began to instruct him, by calling his attention to that part of the moral law—ten commandments—which designate one's duty to his fellow man; the fifth and tenth in-

clusive. The inquirer received the instruction willingly, and declared that from his youth he had observed the things which our Lord pointed out; whereupon, the Lord suggested another requirement, the spirit of which embraces the teaching that is contained in the first four commandments, which refer to man's duty to God. In this last requirement uncompromising obedience is demanded. "Go thy way, sell *whatsoever* thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasures in heaven; and come, take up the cross and follow me." The instruction here is not given as a rule for the government of all men. Some have nothing to sell, and others have such little that disposing of it would not be a great sacrifice. The lesson taught, is, perfect obedience, and not obedience in part; the whole moral 'code, not a part of it. He had answered to six, and passed the examination, but now the teaching of the other four is added. He had "great possessions," and these, more than anything else, prevented him from obeying fully. With another it might be quite a different thing, but the principle would be the same.

When the young man learned that he must make so great a sacrifice in order to inherit

eternal life, "he was sad at that saying, and went away, grieved." This is the history of the first portion of the case, and it is embraced in Mark x, 17-22. But the unhappy termination calls forth certain remarks from our Lord on those who have riches, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Upon hearing this, the disciples were astonished "out of measure," and said among themselves "who, then, can be saved?" After the rich young man left, the conversation was directed to the disciples, and what occurred is recorded in verses 23-27, of Mark x. Beginning with the 28th verse, the conversation takes an entirely different course—though it grew out of the same subject—and it is what follows that caused the remark of our Lord concerning the first and the last. Peter seemed so utterly amazed at the way the matter ended concerning the rich young man, and our Lord's criticism on those who have riches, that he was discouraged as to the possibility of saving men. The disciples said among themselves—aside from the Lord—"who, then, can be saved?" Who will surrender *all* he has? How may we hope

to get converts. Thus the disciples soliloquized. But at last it occurred to Peter that the disciples, at least, were beyond the danger line, for they had really given up all for their new mission, and thus secured their own salvation whether others were saved or not. At last he breaks the silence and says: "Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee." To this our Lord responded with words of approval. He assured him that all who had made such a sacrifice would be abundantly rewarded both in this world and in the world to come, "But," said He, "many that are first shall be last; and the last, first." Verse 31. We may paraphrase thus: what you have said, Peter, about yourself and your fellow disciples having forsaken all to follow me, is indeed commendable and will not go unrewarded, but if you have concluded that it is useless to spend time and labor on those who do not willingly make such a sacrifice, you have reached a too hasty conclusion. Then the Lord gave His own comment on the matter, but it does not appear in the narration as given by St. Mark. His narration stops rather abruptly at verse 31, and the reader, feeling the need of additional light, looks for parallel passages. It may be that an-

other writer has given a fuller account of the very same occurrence, and both narratives will be necessary to complete the subject.

We turn to St. Matthew xix and find that the narration begins at verse 16, and the words which we read in St. Mark x, 31, where his account ends, are given by St. Matthew, xix 30, but the comment which our Lord gave, is recorded only by St. Matthew. This begins with chapter xx, verse 1, and is introduced by the conjunction "for." It is equivalent to saying: but many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first, and I say so for this reason. Then follows the self explanatory parable: Matt. xix 30; xx, 1-16.

30 But many *that are* first shall be last; and the last *shall be* first.

For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *that is* an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

2 And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

3 And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace,

4 And said unto them: Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.

5 Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.

6. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, why stand ye here all the day idle?

7 They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us: He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right *that* shall ye receive.

8 So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward. Call the labourers and give them *their* hire, beginning from the last unto the first.

9 And when they came that *were hired* about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

10 But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.

11 And when they had received *it*, they murmured against the goodman of the house.

12 Saying, These last have wrought *but* one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

13 But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong; didst not thou agree with me for a penny?

14 Take *that* thine *is*, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.

15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? is thine eye evil because I am good?

16 So the last shall be first, and the first last; for many be called, but few chosen.

By this method of analyzing statements, and comparing corresponding passages, we have

reached a very definite understanding of what our Lord meant primarily by the utterance. The refusal of the rich young man to make a great sacrifice formed the basis of the conversation which took place between Him and His disciples, but it was the conclusion reached by the disciples, the spirit of which was expressed by Peter, that called forth the remark. It really partakes of the nature of a mild rebuke, and is a lesson to all, whose work, like that of the disciples, is to save souls. Suppose you have called in the early morning, call again at the third and the sixth; and the ninth hours. And if, at the eleventh hour, there are still those who stand idle, do not regard them as having lost their opportunity. Suppose they have heard previous calls and refused to obey, call them again and again. They may have much greater sacrifices to make than those who responded readily to the first call. They may have reasoned more deliberately than those who acted upon the first impulse; and when, after mature deliberation, they decide to obey at any cost, they may be of greater service to the cause than those who have thought but little about it, and sacrificed but little for it. You may soon again meet that same

rich young man; do not pass him by because when he was first called he refused to come. He and many like him may be slow in beginning, but, once started, may overtake, and even go beyond some who started before them, "For many that are first shall be last, and the last first."

Having understood the primary meaning of a passage of Scripture, cases analogous may be cited with perfect propriety. In this case, the Gentiles who were last to enter the "Kingdom of Heaven" became first in actively forwarding its claims. Many nations that first received the boon of a higher civilization, have betrayed their trust, and lost their standing among the nations of the earth. When once a principle is established, it need not be limited in its application, so long as it is kept within the limits of its true teaching; but the primary lesson which it teaches should form the basis of all lessons that are drawn from it.

CHAPTER III.

SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST.

Verily, I say unto you, all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit (Mark iii, 28-30).

Three of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke, give our Lord's declaration concerning blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. All those accounts should be studied, and in connection with them, such other passages as throw light upon the subject. We have chosen the passage in St. Mark principally on account of the explanatory words of verse 30, because they said, "He hath an unclean spirit."

In St. Matthew, the inference is quite clear that our Lord spoke of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, because He was accused of casting

out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils; while in St. Luke it is not so clear. In a sense, the words of verse 30 help us in understanding the nature of the sin that "hath never forgiveness," and in another sense, St. Luke assists us by removing the declaration entirely away from any connection with that accusation of the scribes. This sin consists, not so much in any particular word or act, as it does in the state of heart that could produce such word or act. The subject is thus introduced by St. Luke:

In the meantime, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, He began to say unto His disciples first of all: Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

2. For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.

3. Therefore, whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.

4. And I say unto you, my friends: Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.

5. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him.

6. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?

7. But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

8. Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God:

9. But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.

10. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven (Luke xii., 1-10).

Observe Verse 1—A multitude of people were crowded about Him as He delivered His great discourse to the Pharisees (see Chap. xi, 14-54). He embraced the opportunity to warn them of the danger to which they were exposed through the influence of the Pharisees. Addressing Himself to His disciples, He said: "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." Beware of the dissemblers. The Pharisees were very religious, but their religion was permeated by the leaven of hypocrisy. They were so exceedingly selfish that they would rather risk their own souls and the souls of others, than to confess that there was in their midst a greater religious teacher than them-

selves. And herein was their great sin, not that they were in the darkness of error, but, that they refused the light; not that they did the wrong and omitted the right, but, that they loved the wrong and hated the right. Hear what our Lord said of them :

1. Then spake Jesus to the multitude and to His disciples,

2. Saying, the scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:

3. All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, *that* observe and do, but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

4. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers.

5. But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments.

6. And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogue.

7. And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi (Matthew xxiii., 1-7).

13. ¶ But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in *your-selves*, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

14. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

15. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves (Matthew xxiii., 13-15).

What an awful state of heart one must be in to be guilty of such serious charges. Think of it: "Ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in." What could have caused such malice in their hearts? Did those religious teachers desire to see all men lost? Did they prefer destruction for themselves? Nay, it was their supreme selfishness that led them on from one degree of opposition to another against the Christ. They were convinced as to His real interest in humanity, and as to His power to bless mankind under all conditions. They knew it only too well, and they knew that the world was finding it out, and was coming to Him for help. But the greater His work, the greater the opposition of the Pharisees. "What shall we do?" they thought, "if we lose our place as teachers and leaders, and men no longer call us Rabbi, Rabbi." The Lord was patient with them even under the greatest provocations. Even when in

their madness, they ascribed to Satan what they knew was the work of God, He reasoned with them, and showed them how utterly impossible was their position. Here is the record :

22. ¶ And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.

23. And he called them *unto him*, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan ?

24. And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

25. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

26. And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end.

27. No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man ; and then he will spoil his house (Mark iii., 22-27).

Observe how this unpardonable sin is stated by our Lord : "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God ; but he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him, but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven him" (Luke xii., 8-10).

Since the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost are one, why is it more sinful to oppose and speak evil of the Holy Ghost, than to do the same against the Father and the Son? In a sense it is not, for, to oppose one, is to oppose all. Therefore, the reason for the opposition must be considered. "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God;" but it was a fool that said so. He is to be pitied and instructed. He is an Atheist, and may have some ground for his unbelief. During the days of the great anti-slavery movement in America, some of the foremost Abolitionists became somewhat skeptical. They could not understand how the Bible could consistently tolerate slavery in any form, at any age of the world, or under any circumstance whatsoever. They could not understand why the God of the Bible did not hasten to their aid—since their work was of a Godly kind—and destroy the enemies of righteousness, and suddenly put an end to the abominable system. They reasoned as men; they were foolish in the sense that they failed to understand God's ways in dealing with men. They could see but one kind of sin, and that, the sin of human slavery. In their zeal for the cause, they would even be-

come unmindful of God's mercy and long suffering toward them, and would cry out against their best friend, and the friend of their cause. But they did not do so maliciously, they did so ignorantly. Some of them lived long enough to see their folly, and to praise God for making their cause a success. Their sin was not of an unpardonable nature. Then as to those who denied the Son of Man, and who spoke words against Him; this was indeed a great sin. So great was it, that our Lord declared that He would report their case in the presence of God and the holy angels. He warned His disciples against the cowardice that would lead them to be guilty of a like sin. "There is nothing covered," He said, "that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore, whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness, shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in the closet, shall be proclaimed upon the housetops." They were warned thus, lest they might, on account of fear of men, be tempted to deny Him when they came before the public, if not by speaking against Him, by holding their peace when their words were needed. "I say unto you, my

friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do" (Luke xii., 4). Here we see a cause for their fear, and the reason why some denied Him. They feared that they would lose their lives. Stephen was stoned to death for bearing testimony of Christ. The parents of the man who was born blind were afraid to tell by what means he received his sight, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; perhaps killed. The enemies of Christ became the enemies of His friends, and were bent upon their destruction. It required no little courage to stand up for Him, and to speak out boldly under such circumstances. The most that can be said against those who denied Him under such circumstances, is, that they were cowards, and through fear were led to speak words against the Son of Man, or even to deny Him. But a loving Saviour is ready to forgive them. "He knoweth our frame. He remembereth that we are dust."

But what can we say for those who are the leaders among the people; who themselves set the religious standard for the people and have therefore nothing to fear from them; who, if they had any honest misgivings as to His claim of di-

vinity upon bare assertion, could no longer doubt His divine power when devils were subject to Him. Even the idolatrous Egyptians, when Moses performed a miracle which they could not imitate, said: "This is the finger of God." The Pharisees knew well that such power was of God, nor had they anything to fear by confessing it. But so great was their malice, that they found a reason to give to the people, in order to keep them still in darkness. In degree of sinning, it was not possible for them to go any farther, and not likely that they would ever feel any disposition to repent. The act then, that is declared blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, is the act of ascribing the work of God's Spirit to Beelzebub, but the inducement was not ignorance or fear, but malice. It is a state of heart that is not reached instantaneously, but by degrees. The following passages throw light upon the subject :

39. ¶ And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.

40. And *some* of the Pharisees which were with Him heard these words, and said unto Him : Are we blind also?

41. Jesus said unto them: If ye were blind, ye should have no sin; but now ye say, We

see ; therefore your sin remaineth (John ix., 39-41).

Therefore your sin *remaineth*, or, *abideth*. Our Lord said that His mission was to enable those to see, who see not, and the Pharisees said : " We see already ;" then, said the Lord, " Your sin remaineth."

The discourse which follows in the tenth chapter of St John is important in showing the responsibility that rests upon those who say, " we see." " He that entereth not by the door of the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."

Then the following occurs in Hebrews vi., 4-6 :

4. For *it is impossible* for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost.

5. And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come.

6. If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance ; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

Also, I John v., 16 : " If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them

that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it."

The question may arise, whether or not there are many who commit the unpardonable sin. So long as it is regarded as a specific act only, men are liable to think that they are in no danger of ever committing it. But when it is regarded as a state of heart that may be reached by persistently rejecting the truth, the danger is apparent. In Matthew, xxv., 29, our Lord says: "For unto every one that hath, shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." The words to emphasize here are these: "shall be taken away." This same verdict is rendered by nature upon her children. If men do not take exercise, they lose the strength of their limbs. If they live in perpetual darkness, they lose their vision: And so, neglected opportunities result in the loss of opportunities. Outraged conscience becomes inactive, and finally refuses to respond at all. Indifference to truth, may lead to a disregard for truth; this point being reached, there is but one step to a positive hatred of truth.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BURNING BUSH.

“And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed” (Exodus iii., 2).

The history of the birth and early life of Moses is given in the second chapter of Exodus. A record of eighty years is crowded into one chapter. This is not an unusual occurrence in biblical history. The life and work of Moses are so interesting, and sustain such an important relation to both the Old and the New Testaments, that every student of the Bible should make himself familiar with them. This means a familiarity with the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy

The scene described in Exodus iii., 2, is unique, and very fittingly begins the third pe-

riod of the life of Moses. To fully appreciate and interpret it, one must study the importance of the mission upon which he was about to enter. The first forty years of his life were spent at the Royal Court (Ex. ii., 1-10). There he was created as the son of Pharaoh's daughter (verse 10; also, Hebrews xi., 24), and "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts vii, 22). The second period of his life begins with his flight from Egypt (Ex. ii., 15). Going to the land of Midian, he became the shepherd of Jethro, the priest of Midian, and followed this occupation for forty years. This second period was no less a preparation for his future work than the first. His literary training was obtained in Egypt, in the luxurious household of a king; but added to this, must be that preparation which comes only of experience and hardships. Forty years of shepherd life, "a stranger in a strange land," was sufficient to give him the practical experience that he would need for his great work as a leader. But something is yet wanting. Without this third acquirement he cannot succeed. He must know God, into whose service he is about to enter. Not the gods of the Egyptians, but the God of his father

Abraham. In the earlier portion of his life, he was rash, perhaps passionate. Upon a slight provocation, his anger became so intense that he slew the Egyptian whom he saw "smiting an Hebrew." Perhaps the humble life that he was forced to lead thereafter did much toward subduing his passionate nature, and implanting within him the spirit of meekness that characterized his after life. But he must know more of the Providence that had been guiding him. He must be brought face to face with the God who would henceforth lead him. How will God manifest himself to him? "And he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and he came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb"—also called Sinai. Here a phenomenon appears. A burning bush. The fire itself would not have attracted especial attention, but for the manner in which it appeared. It was a bush that was on fire, and not a heap of dry brush. But this was not all; "the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed." Fire is not infrequently used as an emblem of God's presence. The presence of God is the first lesson of the burning bush. We are not to be carried away by the simple idea of a miracle. Any kind of

miracle indicates the power of God, but here, the personal presence of God is manifest. Fire is a suitable symbol with which to represent God. It is an emblem of light and heat; and heat is an emblem of life. So, God is the source of light and life. Spiritual and physical life; moral and intellectual light. His second appearance to Moses on the same mountain was symbolized by fire. "And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire" (Ex. xix., 18). Fire is also a symbol of the justice and holiness of God? "For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire" (Deut. iv., 24). His personal presence is indicated by fire in the following passages: "And the posts of the door moved at the voice of Him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke (Isaiah vi., 4). "And I looked, and behold a whirlwind came out of the North, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire" (Ezekiel i., 4). "His head and His hair were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire" (Revelations i., 14).

The coming of the Messiah is referred to by

this same symbol, Mal. iii., 1-2. Also, His second coming, II Thes. i., 7-8.

But from this burning bush, there are also other lessons to be learned. Read the commission :

7 ¶ And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which *are* in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;

8. And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

9. Now, therefore, behold the cry of the children of Israel is come upon me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them.

10 Come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt (Ex. iii., 7-10).

The same phenomenon that symbolized the presence of God at Horeb, appearing to Moses, symbolized His presence in Egypt. Notice, the bush burned, but was not consumed; exactly so; the children of Israel whom Moses was called to lead out of Egypt, were, indeed, in the fire of affliction, but they were not consumed. And

why? Because God was with them. That is why the bush was not consumed. It is not necessary to say, as some commentators have said, that perhaps this was not real fire. It cannot be denied that it was real fire into which Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego were thrown, but they were not consumed. Nebuchadnezzar discovered, upon examination, that there were four persons in the furnace, although but three had been cast in. He said: "Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." God present with the "Hebrew children" in the fiery furnace, quenching the flames. God present in the burning bush, so that it was not consumed. God present with His people in Egypt, preserving them from destruction by the fire of affliction through which they were passing. "When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flames kindle upon thee" (Isaiah xliii, 2). It is but reasonable to suppose that Moses often thought of the condition of his brethren in Egypt at the time of his departure, and wondered how they fared. He had been absent from them for forty years. Have

they been crushed out by the treatment of cruel taskmasters, and by the burden of hard labor ? The king had given orders to the midwives to kill all the male children of the Hebrews as soon as they were born (Ex. i., 16). Failing in this, he ordered that every male child should be cast into the river and drowned. Moses was aware of all this, for the edict was in force at the time of his birth, and perhaps continued during the time that he remained there. Viewed in this light, what a lesson is taught by the burning bush ; burned, but not consumed.

But, the lesson does not end here. The Israelites were a type of the Church of God. God called Abraham from a land of idolaters to establish the true religion. The Church of God was organized in his house. He was denominated the father of the faithful. God was called the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. The Lord said to Abraham : " Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them ; and he said unto him, so shall thy seed be (Gen. xv., 5). " And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered " (Gen. xiii.,

16). "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generation for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee" (Gen. xvii., 7). "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ" (Galatians iii., 16).

According to God's promise to Abraham, the preservation of the Jewish people was the preservation of the church. Both under the old and the new dispensations the Church of God has been in the fires of persecution, but has been preserved in the midst of all.

What we have said of the Church of God, which is, all true believers, may also be said of the word of God, upon which the church is founded. All the efforts to destroy it have been futile. It, too, has been literally cast into the fire, having been pronounced "pernicious literature," but it survived the flames; and to day it is published in almost every known language and dialect.

Besides the attacks upon the word of God by pronounced enemies, there are attacks from many who claim to be its friends, but who would

take from it every vestige of divine inspiration. Many Christians are alarmed about the work of the "higher critics," for fear, that they will so mutilate the time-honored chart that it will no longer be considered the safe and infallible guide as of old. Let them but remember the lesson of the burning bush. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the word of God abideth forever. Like leaven, it will go on, silently, but effectively doing its work of establishing the truth in the hearts of men, and lifting the world toward God. "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth forever." (I Peter i., 24-25).

But what shall we say of the burning bush as a figure of the individual believer? To Moses himself it must have been very suggestive. He had been preserved in infancy, notwithstanding the cruel edict of the king under whose reign he was born. And during the forty years that he had been "a stranger in a strange land," the God of his fathers had preserved him. Not only was he preserved from death, but also from the idolatrous influences by which he was environed.

Think of it, for eighty years without any religious teaching of the right kind, except that which he received in his childhood from his mother, who nursed him for the princess. What encouragement for the child of God who is seeking to know His gracious favor more and more ; who has to contend with "the world, the flesh and the devil." He is not left to himself. The very forces against which he contends are sometimes blessings in disguise.

12. Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you :

13. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings ; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

14. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy *are ye*; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you : on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified.

15. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.

16. Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed ; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

17. For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God : and if *it first begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God ?

18. And if the righteous scarcely be saved,

where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

19. Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls *to him* in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator (I Peter iv, 12-19).

CHAPTER V.

MELCHIZEDEK.

“And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine; and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said Blessed be Abraham of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hands. And he gave him tithes of all.” (Gen. xiv., 18-20).

The mysterious person introduced in this passage, is one about whom there has been much comment and speculation. But as the mystery is brushed away, we shall find that the most important thing connected with the history of Melchizedek was his character. Excepting certain advantages which he enjoyed, 'owing entirely to the age in which he lived, his life may be substantially repeated in any individual. What is Abraham doing in his neighborhood, and why does he, and the king of Sodom come out to meet him with presents and blessings, are questions which

concern us in studying his history. The following paragraph will probably introduce the subject:

5. ¶And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.

6. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together; for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.

7. And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land

8. And Abraham said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen, for we be brethren.

9. *Is* not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me; if *thou wilt take* the left hand then I will go to the right; or if *thou depart* to the right hand, then I will go to the left.

10. And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it *was* well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, *even* as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.

11. Then Lot chose him all the plains of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east; and they separated themselves the one from the other

12. Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched *his* tent toward Sodom,

13. But the men of Sodom *were* wicked and sin-

ners before the Lord exceedingly (Gen. xiii., 5-13).

Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom. This location gave him certain temporal advantages. It was well watered, "like the land of Egypt." But the men of Sodom "were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." Men sometimes accept temporal advantages at the expense of their spiritual interests. This was, unhappily, the case of Lot.

The cities 'in the "plain of Jordan" were under tribute to the powerful king Chedorlaomer. Twelve years they served him, and the thirteenth year they rebelled. In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer, with three other kings, came down upon them, overpowered them, and carried away many captives and much goods. Among the captives was Lot, the nephew of Abraham (see Gen. xiv., 1-12). When Abraham heard that Lot was captured and carried off, he organized a small army, consisting of three hundred and eighteen persons, and pursued the retiring kings. This was, indeed, a daring undertaking, and shows that Abraham was a man of courage and strong faith in God. This was before his faith was tried in the case of Isaac.

It is interesting to note, that the persons who went to battle with Abraham were those of his own household (Verse 14), and evidently partook largely of his spirit. They came upon the enemy by night, when they were not expecting and were not prepared for an attack, and smote them. They captured much booty, but especially Lot and his goods. It was on his return from the successful attack upon Chedorlaomer, that Melchizedek came out to meet him, and blessed him, and received tithes from him of the goods which he had recovered.

Who was Melchizedek ?

This is the first mention of him in the Bible. He bursts as suddenly into history as a stranger makes his appearance when unexpected. He at once attracts attention on account of his official prominence. He is "King of Salem—Jerusalem, perhaps—but, more than this, he is "Priest of the most high God." He outranks Bera, king of Sodom, who came first to meet and congratulate Abraham, but who stood aside as soon as Melchizedek appeared on the scene. He even outranks Abraham. Without ceremony, and with undisputed right, he took charge of the situation, pronounced the patriarchal blessing

upon the "Father of the Faithful," and received tithes at his hand. Whether by accident or design, his dominion had not been attacked by the warring kings. He is king of righteousness, as his name implies, and is king of Salem, place of peace.

That his priesthood is fully recognized, is evident from the following passages: "The Lord has sworn, and will not repent. Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek" (Psalms cx., 4). Another passage, which not only declared his priesthood to be legitimate, but designates its rank, is the following:

1. For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him:

2. To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation king of righteousness, and after that also king of Salem, which is, king of peace;

3. Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually

4. Now, consider how great this man *was*, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.

5. And verily, they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood,

have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham :

6. But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises.

7 And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.

8. And here men that die receive tithes ; but there he *receiveth them*, of whom it is witnessed that he ~~liveth~~.

9. And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes to Abraham.

10, For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchizedek met him.

11. If, therefore, perfection were by the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need *was there* that another priest should rise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron ?

12. For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

13. For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar.

14. For *it is* evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.

15. And it is yet far more evident, for that after the similitude of Melchizedek there ariseth another priest,

16. Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life (Hebrews vii., 1-16).

Here, his rank is above that of the Levitical priesthood, and is a type of the priesthood of Christ.

In the speculations concerning Melchizedek, some have held the opinion that he was Shem, one of the three sons of Noah. By this means the Jews sought to account for his superiority over Abraham. Others, more modern writers, have named Shem, Ham, Mizriam and Canaan. Some believe that he was Enoch or Job, come back to earth. Others have held that Melchizedek was no other than the Son of God himself. Some, not willing to go so far, have concluded that he was an angel. This notion was held by Origen and some of his pupils. There is nothing so out of place in Scriptural interpretation, as this reckless and wild speculative method. If it is to be reduced to mere conjecture, with no record to warrant it, we may have as many interpretations as we have readers. It is just as reasonable to guess that Melchizedek was Adam or Abel, as that he was Enoch, or Noah. As to the speculations concerning Shem, Ham and others, the record is against such a conclusion. We are told in Hebrews vii., 3, that he was without father or mother, without descent, hav-

ing neither beginning of days, nor end of life. That is to say, he was without pedigree. There was no record of his ancestors, as there was of the Levitical priests. This could not be said of Shem and his brethren, whose ancestors were known. What the writer of Hebrews is contending for is, that Melchizedek not only antedates the Levitical priests, but that, unlike them, we have no record of when his priesthood began, nor where it ended; and that his is, therefore, a true type of the priesthood of Christ. He represents in himself at once, priest and king. This was not true of the Aaronic priesthood, but it was of Christ. As to the dignity of his office and the recognition which he received from the men of his day, from Abraham, and from later writers of the Bible, we have abundant testimony in the Bible itself; as to who he was, why surround it with mystery? He was simply a representative person among the Canaanites. More likely a descendant of Ham than of Shem. Enjoying the confidence of his brethren and fellow citizens on account of his eminent piety. Acting among them as both king and priest. He outranked the king of Sodom, because he was not only king, but priest

also. We have other records in the Bible of priests, previous to the regularly organized Levitical priesthood. Jethro, father-in-law to Moses, was priest of Midian. The most remarkable thing about Melchizedek is, that a man living in his age and in the midst of a wicked and idolatrous people, should have grasped and maintained the true faith. The Sodomites, his near neighbors, were notorious for their wickedness. The Canaanites as a people were wicked idolators; and Joshua, and the leaders of Israel were, in after years, commanded to destroy and drive them out. No exception was made in the divine command concerning any sector tribe among them. And yet, this man seems not only to have kept aloof from the crimes and idolatry of his day, but to have established a system of religion, based upon the monotheistic idea; and stood as a sort of mediator between God and his people, offering sacrifice for them. He was called "Priest of the most high God." It is strongly implied, at least, that there existed a regularly constituted form of worship, with ministering priests and sacrifices. The use of bread and wine by Melchizedek is also significant, as these materials afterwards came into

use on the table of shewbread, and later still, as emblems of the body and blood of our Lord. Just to what extent God has been pleased to reveal himself to man in the darker ages of the world, we cannot definitely know, but here is one, who in the darkness and gloom of his surroundings, became a bright and shining light. Why look about for a mystery when there is none, except the mystery of God revealing himself to man in spite of his sinful nature, his ignorance and sinful surroundings. It is highly probable that neither Melchizedek nor the men of his day had any idea of his true greatness, nor of the significance of his combined regal and priestly office. It remained for St. Paul—if the epistle to the Hebrews is Pauline—to tell of the dignity of his office as the first in a priesthood that should remain forever. One that was not made “after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.” One that was not dependent upon pedigree and ceremony, but divine approval. If in so dark an age, in the midst of a “crooked and perverse generation,” one life could stand out so conspicuously, how much more should we; who live under the sunlight of the gospel let our light

shine. Our Lord said that it would be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for the people of His day who rejected His message. There is many a person to-day unknown to the world, "without father or mother" so far as pedigree is concerned, whose faith and piety have never been heralded abroad, but who, like Melchizedek, are veritable priests of the most high God. Their lives, though circumscribed to narrow and humble limits, are a standing rebuke to many who enjoy superior privileges. They can never in the same sense be a type of Christ; that opportunity came but once, and the day has passed; but they are numbered among the "royal priesthood," the "peculiar people," and will be accepted of Him when He comes to make up His jewels.

CHAPTER VI.

THE REVELATION.

This book occupies a unique place in the canon of Holy Scriptures, in that it never fails to awaken the greatest interest among Bible readers.

Although the name Revelation implies something revealed, or, uncovered, it is generally regarded as the most mysterious book of the Bible. Regarding it in this light, men have drawn upon their imagination, and have given to the world numerous interpretations of the symbolic language with which the book abounds. So long as the teaching is regarded as being veiled in mystery, every individual may claim the right to use his own judgment in the work of interpretation. A favorite way of proceeding seems to be to select some striking figure that is employed, wrest it from its connection with what precedes and what follows, and then begin

to speculate on its probable meaning. Perhaps the first and most important lesson to be learned in order to obtain a better understanding of this wonderful book is, that it is not made up of disconnected fragments, but is a continuous narration. Even the many figures used are harmonious. The writer adopts a certain style of symbolic expression, and proceeds systematically in the use of it. A few of his figurative expressions are borrowed from other books of the Bible; especially from Daniel and Ezekiel, but the most of them are peculiarly his own, and are not found outside of the "Revelation." The book is written in Greek, but the writer is intensely Hebraic, and this accounts for many peculiar forms not found elsewhere in New Testament Greek, and also for the use of certain numbers, such as 12, 24 and 144. When once a familiarity with his style is obtained, the narration is easy, graceful, natural. The Revelation is intensely interesting from beginning to end, whether it is understood or not, but it is profitable and instructive only to the extent that it is understood.

The title generally given is, "The Revelation of St. John the Divine." But the writer him-

self begins the narrative thus : "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him, to show unto His servants, even the things which must shortly come to pass, and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John." The Revelation is from God, given by Jesus Christ, through an angel, to His servant John, for His servants. The purpose was not to hand down a mystery, but to "shew unto His servants" things which would have remained unknown without a special revelation. St. John is only an instrument of communication, and his individuality is seen only in his style of writing.

The first three chapters constitute the introduction to the book, the narration, proper, begins with Chapter IV

Before proceeding with the expository work, we call attention to a few things by which we shall be guided. First of all, this book is a history of the Christian Church in her battles against the opposing powers of the world. Standing upon this broad basis, we shall not attempt to explain specifically the many symbols that are employed. We believe that such a method of interpretation is sure to lead one astray, as it is impossible to know what particu-

lar person or thing some of the symbols refer to. For instance, the white horse of the first seal, Chapter vi., 2, evidently denotes in general the conquests of Christ through His gospel; while the red horse of the second seal, Chapter vi, 4, denotes war and carnage as accompanying the progress of truth. In much the same way we shall deal with the most of the symbolic language of the book, having ascertained the general meaning. An exception to this, will be the well known signification of certain numbers, and such symbols as can be definitely and satisfactorily traced to certain objects.

In making direct quotations, we prefer to use the text of the Revised Version. With these preliminary statements, we invite the reader to again peruse the pages of this book, with the hope of obtaining additional light.

Chapter I. The Apostle states that he was in the Isle called Patmos, not from choice, but, "for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus," that is, he was banished there for bearing testimony of Jesus. It was while here, an exile, that he came to be "in the spirit," and received from God the revelation which he wrote. Jacob, Moses, Elijah, Ezekiel and Dan-

iel had revelations while in exile. John Bunyan wrote his famous "Pilgrim's Progress" while he was in prison. The world has yet to learn the value of adversity, but especially when it comes from heroically declaring the "counsel of God." St. John says: "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, "What thou seest, write in a book, and send it to the seven churches." The seven churches are in Asia, the home of St. John, hence, their selection is perfectly natural. Observe the number seven. Seven churches; seven golden candlesticks: seven stars; seven horns; seven eyes; seven spirits of God; seven thunders; seven seals; seven last plagues; seven golden vials full of the wrath of God. The number seven denotes completeness; hence, the message, though sent to but seven churches, is for the Church universal. The person whom the Apostle saw in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks was the Lord Jesus. Here, as in his gospel, St. John calls Him the Son of Man. In Daniel vii., 13, the phrase is used. "His head and his hair were white as wool, white as snow" This same language, used in a slightly different manner,

is also employed by Daniel vii., 9; in both cases the attribute of eternity is evidently meant. The language of verse 16 is very significant: "And he had in his right hand seven stars." We have no difficulty in determining the meaning of the seven stars, as in verse 20, they are explained as meaning the angels—ministers—of the seven churches, but observe that He holds them in His hand. They are His, as is the word which they are to proclaim. They are to reflect His light, as they have none of themselves. They are, indeed the "light of the world," but that light is reflected, and then, only when He holds them "in His right hand." The sharp two edged sword, which proceeded out of His mouth, needs no explanation; the sword of the Spirit is the word of God.

This completes Chapter first. Chapters second and third contain words of warning, admonition, and commendation to the churches that are to receive the revelation. Not simply to these seven churches of proconsular Asia, that is, the western portion of Asia Minor, but the church universal.

Chapters two and three contain the message to the seven churches that are selected. They

are the churches of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. There is nothing especially difficult in these two chapters. The message is plain and forcible. The churches of Ephesus, Pergamos and Thyatira have their attention called, Chap. ii., verses 6, 14 and 20, to the deeds of the Nicolitans, the doctrine of Balaam, and the teaching of Jezebel. The general opinion is, that those sects here referred to, disregarded the moral law, teaching that Christians were no more bound to keep the moral, than the ceremonial law of Moses. From Acts xv., 20-29, it appears that such doctrine was in existence. It is important to notice how even these were given an opportunity to repent. This is the true mission of Christianity, to show men their sins, and call them to repentance.

Chapter IV "After these things, I saw, and behold a door opened in Heaven, and the first voice which I heard, a voice as of a trumpet speaking with me, and saying, Come up hither, and I will show thee the things which must come to pass," verse 1. Here begins the wonderful revelation. A throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. He who gave the revelation is represented as sitting upon a throne in

heaven. As the revelation was from God, given by Jesus, it seems difficult to decide whether it was the Father or the Son who sat upon the throne. Probably it was the Trinity, as seems to be indicated by the Trisagion—holy, holy, holy—of verse 8. The “rainbow round about the throne,” verse 3, may not differ in signification from the rainbow of Genesis ix., 12, as such, then, it is a pledge that God will faithfully keep His word. Round about the throne, were four and twenty seats, and upon the seats, four and twenty Elders sitting; before the throne, there were seven lamps burning, and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne were four living creatures—often translated four beasts—full of eyes before and behind. The sea of glass like unto crystal that was before the throne, may mean nothing more than the reflected glory of the throne and that which was in and about it. It is as though the writer said: “The space immediately in front of the throne had the appearance of a sea of glass,” just as he does say in verse 3. “He that sat was to look upon like jasper and a sardine stone.” As to the four and twenty Elders, twelve is the number used always to designate

the Jewish Church, and twenty-four, twelve doubled, represents both the Jewish and Christian churches. The seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, are explained as representing the seven spirits of God : that is, the perfection of the Holy Spirit represented by the perfect number seven. Not seven spirits, but one Spirit in his sevenfold, or, perfect manifestation. The white raiment worn by the four and twenty elders, signifies purity, and the golden crowns upon their heads are emblems of victory. There has been much speculation about the four living creatures of verse 6. Verse 7 throws sufficient light upon the subject to save the reader from the necessity of proceeding upon mere conjecture. "And the first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face as of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle." The scene of this fourth chapter seems to be the inauguration of the Trinity: God upon the throne, the Lamb "in the midst of the throne" see Chap. v., verse 6, and the Holy Ghost represented by the seven lamps Chapter iv., verse 5. It is proper that the inauguration should be engaged in by representatives of the

Church, Hebrew and Christian, and by representatives of the whole creation. And here we have in verse four, the Church of God represented by the four and twenty elders, and in verses six and seven, the wild beast creation, represented by the lion; the domestic animals represented by the calf, or ox; the fowls of the air represented by the eagle, and the human family by the creature which had a face as a man. Here is the inaugural declaration: "Worthy art thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power: for thou didst create all things, and because of thy will they were, and were created."

Is it possible to imagine a scene more sublime! The Father, Son and Holy Ghost entering upon the conquest of the world, and the whole creation, with the Church of God recognizing the right of Deity to be the supreme ruler. Is it any wonder that such a scene should be draped with such magnificent imagery, and announced by "lightnings and thunderings and voices"? Chapter iv., verse 5.

Chapter V—"And I saw in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne, a book, written within and on the back, close sealed with seven

seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a great voice, Who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof?" verses 1-2. In Matthew xiii., 11, our Lord speaks of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. This book, in the hand of Him that sat upon the throne, contained those mysteries. The writing was not only within the book, or the roll, but on the back also, denoting the fullness of its contents. The *seven* seals, denote the completeness of the Revelation, also the care with which the contents are guarded. Who can unfold those mysteries? Who can carry out the plan of salvation? Who is able to lead in this great conflict that has for its object the conquest of the world? We saw in Chapter ii, that surrounding the Triune God was the whole creation represented by the four living creatures. Is any one of these able to do the work? The strong angel cries aloud, but no response comes, though all creation hears him. This failure to find one who is able to undertake the work, causes the weeping of verse 4. In verses 6-7 one from the midst of the throne, and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the Elders, came forward and took the book. He is

called the "Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David." He is also called "a Lamb." The former designation is a purely Jewish description, while the latter is peculiar to the writer of the Revelation. This Lion-Lamb creature had seven horns—denoting power—and seven eyes denoting omniscience—all wisdom. It is perfectly clear that he who comes forward and takes the book from him who sat upon the throne is Christ, and henceforth, throughout this book, the Revelation, Christ is represented as the one who represents the Trinity in the struggle, while beasts of various descriptions represent the world's side. Notice how, and by whom the Lamb who took the book is received. Verses 8-14. He is considered worthy to be the chief in this conflict, because He was slain, and did purchase unto God, with his blood, men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and made them to be unto God a kingdom and priests—not kings and priests. In this inauguration of Christ, the whole creation joins: "Every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them." This is the language of verse 13. The concluding

words of Chapter V are, "The four living creatures said amen, and the Elders fell down and worshipped."

Chapter VI. "And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the Seven Seals, and I heard one of the living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, Come."

Here, the Revelation begins. In the five preceding chapters, we have had only the preparation. The Revelation begins with the opening of the Seals of the book which contained the mysteries. As the future of the whole Creation is sealed in the book, the representatives, namely, the four living creatures, proclaim the opening of the seals, and give the invitation, "Come!" Some editions of the Greek text have the words, "Come and see," but this is not important. The seven seals, the seven vials and the seven trumpets bear an intimate relation to each other, as we find in proceeding with the work. The living creature that proclaimed the opening of the first seal, spoke as with the voice of thunder. Some have supposed that this was the Lion, but such a supposition is not necessary. A special revelation of the Divine will is usually accompanied by thunder; see Exodus

xix., 16; also instances in subsequent chapters of this book. It is indicative of the majesty and power of God from whom the Revelation comes. The first scene, after the opening of the first seal, is the appearance of a white horse and his rider. A somewhat similar scene is found in Zechariah i., 8-12. We shall see the white stone, white cloud, white garments, white throne, and more about the white horse. This color is in every case used to represent heavenly things. The horse himself, is a symbol of war, his color shows whence he comes; see Chapter xix., 14. The bow in the hand of the rider, shows that he was going to war, and the crown is emblematic of victory. The appearance of the white horse at the very first, with the promise of victory, is evidently designed to give hope and encouragement to those who are on the Lord's side, hence to the Church. Such encouragement is needed for the Church as a whole, and for each individual, as formidable forces are to be met. John is writing to the "churches," and victory is promised them at the beginning of the conflict.

The opening of the next three seals was followed by the appearance of red, black, and pale

horses, verses 3-8. The red horse, an emblem of war; the black horse, signifying want, woe, mourning; natural results of war. The pale horse means death, the final result of war. The name of him that sat upon the pale horse was death, and hell followed after him; that is, Hades followed, meaning the grave, rather than the place of torment. The grave was needed for all who were slain in the battle, both the good and the bad.

The seven seals, rather, the contents of the book thus sealed, are in two divisions. The first group consists of the first four, and have to do especially with things of earth. The trials through which the faithful must pass are given in the opening of the first four seals. With the opening of the fifth, the scene changes somewhat. "And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held." The verse is self-explanatory. Those martyrs, resting in the spirit land, seem to know of the conflict still in progress upon the earth, and they inquire how long it is to continue. Further than this, we have no scriptural warrant in going. They are

given white robes, and are told to rest on for a while. The opening of the sixth seal, verse 12, presents the scene of the judgment. Our Lord describes it in Matthew xxiv., which chapter should be read in connection with the study of this passage.

Chapter VII.—“After this, I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that no wind should blow on the earth, or on the sea, or upon any tree.” Remember, the sixth chapter presents a scene of the judgment, and closes with the words, “For the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand?” Now, instead of passing directly from the sixth to the seventh seal, a further description is given in Chapter vii. of conditions upon that day. Four angels are sent to turn loose the winds upon the earth see Job i., 19, and many other passages in the Bible that record great destruction by wind. The angels stand upon, or at the four corners of the earth; that is, in the East, West, North and South, thus controlling the whole earth. The number four, as we have seen, is a symbol of universality. But before they are permitted to let loose the winds and continue the destruction

spoken of in Chapter VI, another angel descends from the Sunrising, the East, with the Seal of the living God, and commands the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, to restrain the "four winds" until the servants of God were sealed in their foreheads. This sealing in the foreheads reminds us of the blood that was sprinkled on the doorposts of the Israelites in Egypt until the destroying angel had passed. The preservation from the four winds is also alluded to in Matthew xxiv, 31, where our Lord describes the scene of the judgment. The teaching seems to be plainly this, that in the day of judgment, God will preserve His servants from the destruction which shall be upon the earth. The number of them that were sealed, verse 4, is given as a hundred and forty and four thousand; twelve thousand from every one of the twelve tribes of Israel, hence, twelve times twelve. This is not to be taken literally, but to be interpreted according to the method of interpretation that we have been following. First, it signifies a large number; but more than that, it signifies that the number sealed embraced all that were entitled to the benefit of the sealing; that is, the whole,

or perfect number of the saints was protected from the destruction. And here are the significant figures: twelve thousand, 12, is used in the Apocalypse to signify that which is complete; it is typical of a complete and perfect number. The factors of 12, are 4 and 3; four, as in the case of the four corners of the earth, represents the universe, and three, the Godhead; 4 plus 3 is 7, the sacred or perfect number, and thus, we have here represented, 3, 4, 7 and 12; and as if to emphasize the perfectness of the number, and show that it was nothing wanting, we have twelve multiplied by twelve, which is 144. These are sealed on the last day. But there are many more who belong to this company, who have passed through "tribulations" previous to those which are now about to come upon the earth, and they, too, must be added to this number, and when they are all brought together they are referred to in verse 9, as "a great multitude which no man could number, out of every nation, and of all tribes and peoples and tongues." The judgment is passed, and all those who have overcome, who have "come out of the great tribulation," that is, have passed through all the tribulations of life, as well as

those who were preserved from the evils of the last day, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, are before the throne of God.

Notice, that it is one of the Elders who explains who these are, verse 14. We have explained in a preceding chapter, that the four and twenty Elders of Chapter IV, verse 4, represent the church universal, hence it is proper that one of these representatives should speak for the Redeemed who have overcome the world, and have been saved by the blood of the Lamb.

Chapter VIII.—“And when he had opened the seventh seal, there followed a silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.” We have reached the last seal of the book referred to in Chapter V, 1. It is important to remember that the events which followed the opening of the first four seals, had to do entirely with things pertaining to the earth. The white, red, black and pale horses came forth. But, accompanying the opening of the three last seals, were events which pertain to heaven; the souls under the altar, the phenomena of the sun, moon and stars, and the silence in heaven. In Chapter VII, after the opening of the sixth

seal, there was great rejoicing, and giving of thanks and praise, verses 10 and 12, and the Elder of verse 13; states in verse 15, that those who are before the throne of God, serve Him day and night. But immediately upon the opening of the seventh seal, there is silence in heaven.

We cannot know to a certainty the cause of the silence. Various conjectures have been given, but these are only conjectures. In the light of what follows in Chapter IX, it seems quite probable that the silence was indicative of the importance of what was to follow the opening of the seventh seal. The second verse, like verse 1, Chapter 5, begins with the words "and I saw." What follows is a new vision, and not a part of that which is expressed in verse 1, but it is connected directly with it. Standing before God were seven angels, and there were given them seven trumpets, verse 2. It does not seem clear whether John saw the angels standing before God during the time of the silence or immediately afterward; the latter is more likely, and appears more natural. Those seven angels that stood before God with the trumpets were to sound them consecutively, as the seals were

opened in order. The cause of the sounding of the trumpets, rather, of what would follow, seems to be indicated in Chapter vi., verses 9-10, where the souls under the altar exclaim: "How long, Master, the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" Notice, the opening of the seals revealed the trials which came upon the faithful; the inquiry of the souls under the altar appears to have come from a desire to know when the scales would be turned. It is as though they had said, "The saints are having great trials, surely the sinners are not to escape; if not, how long will it be before their time will come?" Now, in Chapter viii., verse 3, another angel "came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense that he should add it unto the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne." Is not this the same altar referred to in Chapter vi., verse 9?: "And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand." After this, the seven angels, verse 6, prepared themselves to sound. It will be seen that what follows the sounding of the trumpets is

intended to bring judgment upon those who were not sealed, see Chapter ix., verse 4, and seems to come in answer to the prayers of the saints, see Chapter viii., verse 3. The vision of the trumpets over the same ground that was gone over by the vision of the seals, but applies to a different class of people. The saints had their trial first, now the judgments are come upon their oppressors and slayers.

Verses seven to thirteen include the sounding of the first four trumpets—which seem to belong to a group like the first four seals—and the judgments which follow, are almost a repetition of some of the plagues that were inflicted upon Egypt when the Israelites were preparing to leave. The language is figurative, and must be so regarded in interpretation, and yet, in many instances, the events predicted, have evidently been literally fulfilled. The division of the group is clearly seen in verse 13, where the angel flying in mid heaven proclaims, “Woe, woe, woe, for them that dwell on the earth,” by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels who are yet to sound.

Chapter IX.—The ninth chapter is devoted to the sounding of the fifth and sixth angels, and

what followed. This chapter, indeed both this and the preceding chapter, are rather difficult of interpretation. The fact is, they refer to the judgments of God upon the unrighteous; and while here and there are indications that seem to point to particular persons and periods, we are not warranted in making such an interpretation as will point out this and that person and exclude all others. In these two chapters especially, we can well afford to interpret broadly, and make full allowance for the figurative language by which the events are expressed. The chapter begins thus: "And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven fall into the earth, and there was given to him the key of the pit of the abyss." In referring to the star, the pronoun employed is *him*, not *it*. This shows that the figure is used to represent personality. A person who is in high position is sometimes referred to as a star. We also have Bible references of this kind; see Numbers xxiv., 17; also Isaiah xiv., 12. The first reference is to Christ, the second to Satan. From what follows in this ninth chapter, it seems quite clear, the verse 1, refers to Satan. The smoke that went up out of the pit of the abyss, making the sun and the air dark, is the evil influences

that darken the minds of men that they cannot see the truth. The locusts of verse 3, are the evil spirits that afflict men with disease, and in other ways torment them, or lead them to commit acts of violence. The sounding of the sixth angel of verse 13, and what followed may be interpreted in a similar manner. The four angels which are bound at the river Euphrates are loosed, and verses 15-20 record the destruction which followed, while verse 21 indicates the character of the persons upon whom the destruction came.

Chapter X.—Six trumpets have sounded, and between the sixth and seventh there seems to be an interval. The same thing occurred, Chapter vii., between the opening of the sixth and seventh seals. The accounts are not disconnected in either case, however, but the introduction to the seventh seal and the seventh trumpet is more elaborate. Chapter X. and XI., 1-14, are devoted to the elaboration of the sixth, and introduction to the seventh trumpet. Chapter X. opens thus: "And I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, arrayed with a cloud; and a rainbow was upon his head, and

his face was as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire." The description of the angel is nothing unusual, especially in apocalyptic writing. It shows the dignity with which this celestial messenger is clothed. "He had in his hand a little book open," verse 2. Unlike the book of Chapter V., 1, it is a little book, and is open. What it contained is given in Chapter XI. The angel stands with his right foot upon the sea, and his left upon the earth. In this position, his face is turned toward Jerusalem. For this reason, some prefer to interpret Chapter xi., 1-2, as meaning literally the Temple at Jerusalem. But this is not at all certain. The language is probably symbolic as elsewhere; see verse 19 of this chapter, also Chapter III, 12, and VII, 15. Viewed in this light, the position of the angel should be interpreted differently. The judgments which followed the sounding of the six preceding trumpets, were limited, but in this case the whole earth is to be affected, hence, the angel stands on both sea and land. When he cried as with the voice of a lion, seven thunders uttered their voices. The evangelist was directed in Chapter i., verse 11, to write what he saw in a book, so he was about to write what

the seven thunders uttered, see verse 4. But this is to be an exception, and he is forbidden to write. God mercifully withholds some things from His people. The declaration in verse 6, that there should be time no longer; seems to bring the events of the seven trumpets up to the judgment, just as was the case in the seven seals. In verses 8-10 St. John is directed to take the book of verse 2, and "eat it up," which was sweet in his mouth, but bitter in his belly. The meaning seems clear; he received the command with pleasure, but when he fully digested, understood it, it became grievous to him. For a similar vision, see Ezekiel iii., verses 1 and 14.

Chapter XI.—"And there was given me a reed like unto a rod; and one said, rise, measure the Temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. And the court which is without the temple, leave without, and measure it not." If, as we have already indicated, we are to take this language as being symbolic, then the temple refers to the church; sometimes on earth, and sometimes in heaven. Here the Church again falls into tribulation. "And the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two

months," verse 2. Forty and two months are three years and a half, the half of seven; and as seven is the perfect number, the half of it is imperfect, or indefinite.

In Chapter ix., verses 20-21, we are told of those who were spared from the plague of the sixth trumpet, but who repented not, and so it seems that here they proceed again with their evil deeds. The two witnesses of verse 3, witness against them, and are protected during the time that they are bearing witness. Verse three makes no description of the two witnesses, but refers to them as though they were well known. As the four and twenty Elders represent, or symbolize the two divisions of the Church, namely, the Church Hebrew and Christian, probably these are meant. The Church bears witness against the world. But in verse 7 the beast that ascended out of the abyss, made war against them, and overcame them, and killed them. They were subjected to great dishonor, not even were their bodies buried, but "lie in the streets of a great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified." Sodom and Egypt are in the singular, *i. e.*, they are referred to as one city.

Symbolically they represent that which is wicked, and is the spirit that caused "their Lord" to be crucified. But after three days and a half, that is, after an indefinite period—the half of seven—life from God entered into them. After their resuscitation, there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, verse 13. Men were affrighted, and gave glory to God. This is an exact repetition of what followed the sixth seal, Chapter VI, verses 12–16. The wicked here killed the witnesses, that is, destroyed their influence for a time, and left them in great dishonor, but the scene changed; right prevailed, and the wicked retreated in great fear.

The seventh angel sounded, verse 15, and heaven rejoiced over the final triumph of the Church. The four and twenty Elders, the Church in heaven, praised God because He had taken to Himself great power and had reigned. And the temple of God was opened in heaven, "and there was seen in His temple the ark of His covenant, and there followed lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail." Thus, the vision of the seven trumpets is ended.

Chapter XII.—With this chapter begins the third and last series of “Revelations.” It describes Satan in his war against the Church. He attacks Christ, the Head of the Church, and when he is defeated, he makes war upon His followers. This series, like the first and second, abounds in symbolic language, and it is useless to attempt to explain in detail every symbol employed. What is taught in the series is quite clear. Satan makes his last great struggle against God, and is finally vanquished. If we said nothing more than this for this series—contained in Chapters xii. xxii.—we would have given a fair interpretation of it. But there are some of the symbols that should be noticed more in detail. Chapter xii. begins thus: We quote still from the Revised Version, “And a great sign was seen in heaven; a woman arrayed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.” The word *heaven* both here and in verse 7, does not mean, as many have erroneously thought, the abode of the saints after death, but, the kingdom of heaven as referred to by John the Baptist, Matthew iii., 2, in the words: “Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

It seems quite clear, that while the first two series of Revelations embraced the Church of God in a general way, this last series, beginning with the Christian Church, has to do especially with the Christian dispensation. The woman "arrayed with the sun, and the moon under her feet"—the sun and moon emblems of her glory and beauty—has "upon her head a crown of twelve stars." The "woman" is symbolic of the Church. The crown of twelve stars, shows that the Jewish Church is meant. She is about to be delivered of a child, namely, the Christian Church, which had its birth in Christ. Verses 3-6 describe how the "red dragon" tried to destroy the "man child;" what influence and power he had, as represented by the "third part of the stars," powers which co operated with him, and his seven heads and ten horns, which are explained in Chapter xvii., 10-12, to mean kingdoms. See also Daniel vii. The woman fled to the wilderness, and is nourished "a thousand, two hundred and threescore days," that is, three and a half years, the half of seven, meaning an indefinite period. She is nourished to the end of time, but the length of time which this includes

is not known to any one, hence, indefinite. The same symbolic language occurs again in verse 14, "A time, and times, and half a time." Three and a half years. The rest of Chapter xii., verses 7-13, is employed in describing the fury of the dragon against the woman, and how, after he failed to destroy her son, he resolved to make war with the rest of her seed, a fact that every Christian experiences.

Chapter XIII.—In Chapter thirteen, two beasts make their appearance, one comes up out of the sea, verse 1, and the other out of the earth, verse 11. The first beast had ten horns and seven heads. It is the same old beast of Chapter xii., 3, heads and horns the same. In this second appearance, however, his power and authority are transferred to worldly powers. Men who for a time prosper by evil doing, become active agents in the cause of Satan. They fairly "worship the dragon," who gives them such power and authority; see verse 4. They speak great things, verse 5. In verse 3 he experiences a crushing defeat: "And I saw one of his heads as though it had been smitten unto death." This refers to some great triumph of the Church; perhaps the resurrection of Christ.

But, his "death stroke was healed." He rallied again. The beast of verse 11 tries to be more subtle than his predecessor. "He had two horns like unto a lamb," but "spoke as a dragon." Lamb-like in appearance, but devil-like in speech. "And he doeth great signs, that he should even make fire come down out of heaven to earth," verse 13. Not literally, of course, but this is a description of some of his deceptions. The two witnesses of Chapter xi., verse 5, could cause fire to proceed out of their mouth, and this beast would like to imitate them. That which is predicted by the mark which he had placed upon all, both small and great, rich and poor, and by the disadvantages that those who had not his mark were subjected to verses 16-17, has been almost literally fulfilled. St. John, the writer, was himself banished to Patmos for refusing to receive the mark, *i. e.* to conform to the world. The caste spirit of to-day is almost as defiant and cruel. His number is given, v 18, as 666. If we follow the symbolic style of interpretation, the most probable meaning is this: Seven is the sacred and perfect number, hence six is less than perfect. Now, this beast, from the very beginning,

assumed the appearance of that which is good. He did not, like the beast that preceded him, come out as an evil doer, and make a fight squarely. His character throughout is that of deception. As the followers of the Lamb have his mark, Chapter iii., 12, so this beast tries to imitate God; and gives a mark also to his followers. Men even tried to put the stamp of divine approval upon human slavery. Ministers preached the Gospel (?) and owned slaves. But God's mark is seven, perfect; the mark of the pretender, hypocrite, is six, imperfect. There is a method of interpreting this passage, verse 18, by reckoning the numerical value of the Greek, or Hebrew letters, until a total of 666 is acquired. By this method, Nero Cæsar, King Nero, written in Hebrew characters, is the name of the beast. But for many reasons, we doubt the correctness of this view, and prefer that which we have given.

Chapter XIV.—“ And I saw, and behold, the lamb standing on the mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty and four thousand, having his name and the name of his father, written on their foreheads.” Observe how Chapter xiii. ends, and Chapter xiv. begins; also, the difference

between where the beast came from, the unstable sea, chapt. xiii, v. 1 and where the Lamb stands, on solid rock; "on the Mount Zion." With him are "a hundred and forty and four thousand." We explained this number in Chapter vii., 4. These have "a mark," the name of God and the Lamb, written on their foreheads. They sing a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures and Elders. In verse 6, an angel goes forth preaching the Gospel. Another angel followed, v. 8, saying, "Babylon is fallen." Babylon represents the world-power which was being overcome by "the Lamb." The chapter continues throughout with a description of the defeat of the beast, and the terrible punishment inflicted upon his worshipers.

Chapter XV.—From the way Chapter xv. begins, one might be led to expect a new series, or, something new compared with what immediately went before. But it is a continuation of the wrath of the Lamb upon the worshipers of the beast. The seven angels, however, have the seven *last* plagues, "for in them is *finished* the wrath of God," verse 1. The "sea of glass," verse 2, is the same as referred to in Chapter iv.,

6, "And before the throne, as it were, a glassy sea like unto crystal." In one place it is crystal, in the other, it is fire. See explanation in Chapter iv.: "Them that come victorious from the beast, and from his image, and from the number of his name, standing by the glassy sea, having harps of God," verse 2. Since the beast represents the world-power, instead of King Nero, then, those who are "victorious" are those who "overcame the world." They sang the song of Moses, and of the Lamb. Compare verses 3-4 with Exodus, Chapter xv., verses 6-7, where we have the song of Moses. Verses 5-8 describe how the seven angels with the seven plagues prepared to perform their work.

Chapter XVI.—In this chapter, we have the judgments of the seven bowls, or vials. It should be remembered that this is the third series of visions. The first was revealed by the opening of the seven seals, the second, by the sounding of the seven trumpets, and this, the third, by the pouring out of the seven bowls of the wrath of God into the earth. The teaching in this series, is much the same as that which precedes. Being the seven *last* plagues, they are more severe than the others, for, "in them

is *finished* the wrath of God," see Chapter xv., verse 1. The vision of the vials, is, as we have intimated, a recapitulation of the teaching of the previous visions. It will be interesting to compare them. Take, for instance, the trumpets and the bowls: the first trumpet, hail, fire, and blood upon the earth; the first vial, a grievous sore upon the worshipers of the beast.

Second trumpet, a burning mountain cast into the sea, sea made blood, destruction to a third part of creatures and ships; second vial, poured into the sea, became as the blood of a dead man, every living soul died.

Third trumpet, a third part of the rivers and fountains of water became bitter wormwood; third vial, poured out upon the rivers and fountains of water, and they became blood.

Fourth trumpet, the sun smitten, one-third of the day darkened; fourth vial, poured out upon the sun, men scorched with fire, and blasphemed the name of God.

Fifth trumpet, star falls from heaven, is given the key of the pit of the abyss, he sends forth locusts, men seek death; fifth vial, poured out

upon the seat of the beast, his kingdom smitten, men in pain.

Sixth trumpet, armies from the Euphrates destroy a third part of men; sixth vial, the way prepared for kings beyond the Euphrates.

Between the sixth and seventh trumpets, the two witnesses of God witness for Him and work miracles; between the sixth and seventh vials, three unclean spirits of the dragon witness for him and work miracles.

Seventh trumpet, voices in heaven, earthquake, hail; seventh vial, voices in heaven, fall of Babylon, earthquake, hail. Both close with scene of the judgment.

The symbolism of chapter XVI may be interpreted upon the same principle that we have established. The Hebrew "Har-mageddon" of verse 16, where the spirits of verse 14 gathered the kings together "unto the war of the great day of God," is probably a reference to Mount Carmel, which rises up from the plain of Megiddo. See Zechariah xii, 11. Also 2 Kings, xxiii, 29, ix, 27, and Judges v, 19, for battles fought at Megiddo. While Babylon is generally a symbol of the world-power, its specific and definite use in some places in this series seems

to refer to the ancient city of Babylon. Notice, also, that the plagues of this series, answer to some of those inflicted upon the Egyptians.

Chapter XVII. This chapter is really self-interpreting. Those who have studied the preceding chapters, should have no difficulty in understanding this. One of the seven angels that had the seven bowls, or vials, explains the judgment of the great harlot. The scarlet-colored beast—perhaps a beast arrayed in scarlet—the woman sitting upon him—depending upon him for power and influence—arrayed in scarlet and purple, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, is another picture of the unfaithful portion of the church, that is influenced more by the world, and selfishness, than by God. The seven heads of the beast, denote the completeness, or universality of the earthly dominion, *i. e.* it is everywhere opposing the right. The ten horns denote power. Verses 16-17 are very significant. Here the horns—worldly power—turn upon the harlot and destroy her. This is always what the world does finally to the hypocrite. The woman of verse 18 is identified with the great city Babylon; this is symbolic of the fact, that in the days of the writer,

Babylon was referred to as the headquarters of vice and hypocrisy. But the interpretation has to do with all places that are thus dominated by the world-power.

The beast of verse 8, that was and is not, and yet is, denotes in a general way, the temporary success of the world-power, then a reversion, and afterwards its reappearance. It may denote in a more particular manner, the condition of the world before the coming of Christ. Such a condition is spoken of in Isaiah lx., 2. While the Church waited for her deliverer, the "beast" seemed to have held sway. But the Resurrection of Christ was a decided victory for the Church. Indeed, there is nothing like it in the history of all the world. Think of it; one who could "lay down His life," and then "take it up again." Then, it may be said, that Christ was master of the situation, and the beast "was not." But, though defeated for a time, and forced to retreat, he does not give up the fight. He returns "to make war with the remnant of her seed," see Chapter xii., verses 13-17 This he will continue to do until his final overthrow at the last day, the beast himself assisting in his own destruction, verse 17.

Chapter XVIII.—In Chapter xvii., 7, the angel said, “I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and the ten horns.” The beast and the woman are described, and their destruction foretold. In this chapter—Chapter xviii., another angel comes forth and declares that the prophecy of the other angel is fulfilled. Notice the expression in verse 2: “Fallen, fallen, *is* Babylon” These words occur also in Isaiah xxi., 9. The event had not literally taken place when the angel made the declaration, but so sure is the word of God, that the angel did not hesitate to speak of it as though it was even then fulfilled. Verse 4, in a sense, explains why the angel of verse 1 cries “with a mighty voice, saying, fallen, fallen *is* Babylon.” Therefore. “come forth my people out of her,” says yet another angel, verse 4. Every warning, every opportunity that is necessary for the salvation of men, is given. Read Genesis xix., and observe how the faithful that were in Sodom were given an opportunity to make their escape.

The entire chapter is devoted to the story of the overthrow of Babylon, “the great harlot.” Our minds most naturally revert to the words

of Chapter vi., verses 9-10, where, after the opening of the fifth seal, the souls underneath the altar exclaimed: "How long, O master, the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth." The judgment comes; those who have suffered, "for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus" are avenged, and the honor of God is vindicated.

Chapter xix. opens with a description of the rejoicing which took place in heaven over the victory that has just been achieved, see verses 1-2. There were rejoicing, and giving of thanks at the close of the visions of the seals, and of the trumpets, see Chapter vii., 9-17; and Chapter xi., 15-17

The Church universal and the whole creation join in: "And the four and twenty Elders, and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God that sitteth on the throne, saying, Amen; Hallelujah. Verse 4.

The mention of the marriage of the Lamb, in verses 7-8, seems to be incidental, when compared with the more formal mention of Chapter xxi, 9. Those who will participate at the marriage supper, are indicated by the words: "he

that overcometh," chapter iii, verse 21.

Beginning with verse 11, we have a kind of recapitulation of what has gone before. The vision of the seals brought us up to the judgment, then the writer returned, and covered the same ground in the vision of the trumpets, and again, in the vision of the vials. In each case, some new features were brought forward, and in the last, the vision of the vials, the judgments were more severe. And now, in this summary, the ground is again covered, but it is simply a summing up. The visions opened with the appearance of the white horse, and now, in the summary, the white horse is again introduced. In chapter vi, his rider had upon his head a crown; here, he has many crowns, or diadems; verse 12. He is arrayed in a garment dipped in blood, or, sprinkled with blood. In chapter vi, he is going to battle; here, he is returning from the fight. Going out, he had on his head a crown, the promise of victory; returning, he has many crowns, having been abundantly victorious.

Verse 17 introduces a new scene. An angel standing in the sun, that is, standing mid-heaven, cries with a loud voice to all the birds,

to come together at the great supper of God. This is not the marriage supper, but the supper of the ungodly, where their flesh will furnish food for the fowls of the air. Of course, the language is figurative, and yet, it is possible for it to be literally fulfilled.

Verses 19-21 complete the overthrow of the agencies of the world that are hostile to Christ and His kingdom. The beast and his false prophet are "cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, even the sword which came forth out of his mouth; and all the birds were filled with their flesh," verse 21.

Chapter XX.—And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years and cast him into the abyss, and shut it, and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished: After this he must be loosed for a little time. Verses 1-3.

We have seen the judgment of the beast and

his false prophet, and those who were under their control, Chapter xix., verses 20-21. These were the sum total of the agencies of Satan and his followers. Now we come to the judgment of Satan himself. All this is but in keeping with the ultimate victory, promised at the opening of the first seal. It is indeed the hope and encouragement of the faithful, that Satan, with all the powers of darkness, will be finally overthrown. It was the anticipation of those who amid great rejoicing and praise, made ready for the "marriage of the Lamb," Chapter xix., 1-7; see reference also in Chapter xxi., 9. By this time the reader is familiar with the word "abyss," called also "bottomless pit." It is quite clear that this place is not the "lake," where the wicked are placed for punishment, and where Satan himself will finally be cast; see Chapter xx., verse 10, but it is the place from which he carries on his operations in the world; but now, he is "bound" there for a thousand years, so that he cannot "deceive the nations" verse 3. But after this he must be loosed for a little time. Verse 4 tells of those who lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years; that is, during the time that Satan was confined to the

abyss. To follow the plan of interpretation adopted at the beginning of this work, the words "thousand years" must be dealt with here, as elsewhere in the Revelation. For explanation, see comment on Chapter vii, verse 4. The binding of Satan does not mean that he is entirely hindered from carrying on his operations in the world, but that during those operations, the faithful are secure, *i. e.*, he may even tempt, but cannot capture them. He cannot do so for "a thousand years," that is, for the whole "complete" period of their earthly existence: provided, of course, that they do not submit to him. We get light on this important passage, from Chapter vi., verse 11, where the souls under the altar are told to "rest yet for a little time." The same words occur in Chapter xx., 3. In the former, the souls are told to rest yet for a "little time;" in the latter, Satan is loosed for a "little time." *χρονον μικρον* (*Chronon mikron*) a little time; or, a little season. Now, we have found out how long the "little time" of the souls under the altar was; it was during the continuation of "time" until the final judgment. Thus, Satan is consigned to the abyss as his natural abode, but is loosed for a thousand years, which is,

“a little time,” and permitted to carry on his work with those who prefer him as their leader, but, the faithful are protected from his ravages. Where he is said to be “bound,” and afterwards “loosed out of his prison,” must mean, that he is *bound* as to the faithful, and *loosed* as to the unfaithful. The *loosing* may also refer to his partial recovery after a great defeat, such as the Resurrection, as we have elsewhere observed.

Those who have part in the first resurrection, verse 6, are evidently those who are mentioned in verse 4, who were beheaded for the testimony of Jesus. They “lived and reigned with Christ” during the “little time,” *i. e.* “a thousand years,” verse 4, while “the rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished,” verse 5. “The rest of the dead” are most likely the pious who died before the coming of Christ, hence, it cannot be said of them that they died for the “testimony of Jesus.” They do not have part in the “first,” spiritual resurrection; they “lived not until the thousand years should be finished.” They are in a state of rest, but they, not having seen Christ, do not “reign with him” during the time before the judgment.

When the thousand years are finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison; verse 7 That is after his defeat by the Atonement, he is permitted to "come forth," and "deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth" namely "Gog, and Magog," verse 8. Not the whole of the people; only the portion described by the names Gog and Magog. Who are "Gog and Magog?" In Genesis x, 2, we have the following: "The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog." And in Ezekiel xxxviii, 1-2.

And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,

2. Son of man set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him.

And verses 14-16:

14 ¶ Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord God; in that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know *it*?

15 And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army:

16 And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know

me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes.

St. John here uses those terms to symbolize the ungodly portion of the "nations" that are in the "four quarters of the earth." The tenth verse relates to the overthrow of Satan: "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night forever and ever." In Matthew viii., 29, the devils spake thus to Christ: "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" He is now cast into his place of torment, from which he can never again come.

Beginning with verse 10, and occupying the rest of the chapter, we have the scene of the general judgment. "And I saw a *great* white throne," says the writer. The earth and the heaven fled away before the face of him that sat upon the throne to judge the dead, both small and great. The books were opened. The books containing the deeds done in the body, spoken of also in Daniel vii., 10. And "another book," this, the Lamb's book of life, mentioned more than once in the Apocalypse. If any were not

found in this book, they were cast into the lake of fire with the devil and his followers.

“And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death, and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works” verse 13. Death and Hades, that is, death and the grave, are here referred to as having held the dead. Men die, and are buried. This goes on, until death, “the last enemy,” is conquered.” Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the “second death,” verse 14. Here we have a personification of Death and Hades, meaning really their victims. The judging and casting into the lake of fire, constitute the second death; the physical death being the first. In like manner, the second resurrection may be explained; the first being the spiritual resurrection from the guilt of sin.

Chapter XXI.—“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more, verse 1. Chapters **xxi** and **xxii** deal entirely with the new conditions which obtain after the judgment. We saw in chapter **xx**: verse 11, that the earth and heaven fled away

from the face of him who sat upon the "great white throne." The sea is, of course, spoken of in connection with the earth. They "fled away," Temporal things are done away with. In verse second, the new Jerusalem spoken of, is beyond all doubt, typical of the Church of God in her glorified state. See Chapter iii., 12. Jerusalem standing for the Church, Babylon for the world. She is the bride of God, as Babylon, the "harlot," is the votary of Satan. The Church is purified, the marriage is consummated, and God tabernacles with men. The beautiful description of the holy city, beginning with verse 9, is, of course, figurative. For the position and standards of the tribes, East, West, North and South (verse 12 and what follows) see Numbers, Chapter ii.; and Ezekiel, Chapter xlviii., 30 to 35.

The city had about it "a wall, great and high," verse 12. This denotes protection. In Ezekiel xxxviii., verses 1-3, also 10-12, there is an account of a prophecy against Gog and Magog, who had planned to come upon unprotected, *i. e.*, unwalled villages; and as much of the imagery of this chapter is taken from Ezekiel, the writer calls attention to the fact that

the New Jerusalem will not be unprotected; to the contrary, it will have about it "a wall, great and high," and hence, no fear of invasion. All the battles have been fought, and permanent victory achieved. The church is now secure from all enemies. The city has twelve gates, typical of the "spiritual Israel of God." These gates are guarded by twelve angels; at every gate an angel, making the city absolutely secure against any unfriendly approach. "The wall of the city had twelve foundations," indicative of its permanence. "The city lieth four square;" four, as we have elsewhere noticed, represents completeness. "The length thereof, is as great as the breadth;" a beautiful picture of its symmetrical proportions. Nothing is wanting in length or breadth or height, see verse 16. The length and breadth and height are equal. The twelve thousand furlongs indicate largeness and completeness. Plenty of room for all the redeemed. The materials which composed the city, its walls and foundations, are pure gold, and all manner of precious stone. This is emblematical of purity and beauty. "And I saw no temple therein," verse 22. The whole city was a temple, and "God" and "the Lamb" take the place

of the temple which was in the earthly Jerusalem. The city had no need of the sun, moon, or any other light, "for the glory of God did lighten it." "There shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie; but only they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." Blessed estate! Glorious inheritance!

Chapter XXII.—"And he shewed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the midst of the street thereof." Verse 1. This river of water of life, in the midst of the street, is a further description of the New Jerusalem described in the preceding chapter. On each side of the river was the tree of life, bearing a new crop of fruit every month, twelve crops each year, or, in other words, fruit all the time. For another description of the river and tree of life, see Ezekiel xlvi, 12. Can one imagine a more sublime figure of eternal life than this, employed by the Evangelist in verses 1-2? Water of life, a river of it; tree of life, bearing fruit perpetually. Is it any wonder that he says: "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more?" "The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." No hunger,

no thirst, no disease. The "Lamb that was slain," purchased for all, this glorious inheritance, and a general invitation is extended to all, who have but to comply with the conditions, and enter upon it. "And the Sprit and the bride say, come. And he that heareth, let him say come, and he that is athirst, let him come; he that will, let him take of the water of life freely."

CHAPTER VII.

THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE.

In the study of the Scriptures, it is important to know the author, date, and scope of the various books. These have much to do with the interpretation, especially of historical facts. Things that are perfectly natural and obvious in some ages and under certain conditions, would seem quite incredible in a different age and under different circumstances. This is why the regulations of the New Testament differ so widely from those of the Old. But these differences will be found throughout the Bible in both the New and the Old Testaments. Moses was rash and passionate in early life, but he became the meekest of all men in later years. During his ministration he gave to the people certain ordinances and rules—"on account of the hardness of their hearts;" these were set aside by our Lord. The writings of St. Paul at the close of his life, differ in temper so greatly

from his earliest works, that some portions seem to be the work of a different author. The flexibility of the Bible has been used as an argument against its Divine origin, while the fact is, this is one of the strongest proofs in favor of it. It is but necessary to become acquainted with the circumstances under which this or that event took place, in order to be convinced that it is not out of harmony with the rest of the history. A fair knowledge of the author, the date and the subject of each book of the Bible is one of the keys to its interpretation. It is not always easy to determine the date of a particular book of the Bible, nor its author, but we propose to give those dates and authors that are generally accepted by the Christian world, and we are sure that such a compilation will be of great convenience to the Bible student.

The first five books of the Bible are grouped together and called the Pentateuch. The word is a compound of two Greek words which signify respectively, "five," and "a volume;" hence, five volumes, or five books. These five books were probably thus classified because they were written by the same author, and deal substantially with one great subject.

The books comprising the Pentateuch are as follows:

GENESIS.

The word Genesis, from the Greek, signifies generation. It was written by Moses, and gives an account of "the beginning of all things:" The creation of the world; the fall of man; the multiplication of species; the origin of religion; the corruption of the world by sin; the destruction of the world by the deluge; the restoration of the world; the peopling of the world; the call of Abraham, "the father of the faithful," and the history of the patriarchs to the death of Joseph.

It is not definitely known when the book of Genesis was written. Some believe that it was while Moses kept the flocks of Jethro in the wilderness of Midian; others, that it was written after the departure of the Israelites from Egypt. We give as an approximate date, about 1490 B. C.

EXODUS.

This book, as its name signifies, gives an ac-

count of "the Exodus," or departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt. The persecution of the Israelites by the Egyptians; the birth, preservation, and early life of Moses; his departure from Egypt at the age of forty; his desert life during a period of forty years; his return to Egypt as deliverer of his people; the series of plagues inflicted upon the Egyptians, and the great "Exodus" from Egypt. It also contains an account of the desert life of the Israelites up to the giving of the law and the erection of the tabernacle. As in the case of Genesis, the precise date is not known, but it is certain that it was written after the occurrence of the events which it records, and that it was also written by Moses.

LEVITICUS.

Leviticus is the third book of the Pentateuch, and is so called because it contains principally the laws governing the Levitical priesthood. Some one has said, "Its best commentary is the Epistle to the Hebrews." It gives an account of the consecration of Aaron and his sons as priests; the punishment of Nadab and Abihu; the laws concerning the purification of priest

and people, and concerning sacred festivals, vows and tithes. Moses is the author, and it was evidently written after that of Exodus, but belongs to the same period.

NUMBERS.

The book of numbers derives its name from the fact that it contains the records of two numberings of the children of Israel; see Chapters i., ii., iii. and xxvi. The second numbering occurred after the destruction, recorded in Chapter xxv. The book closes with the following words: "These are the commandments and the judgments, which the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses unto the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho." This verse refers to Moses as the author of this book, and at the same time indicates the time and place of writing. The place is the "plains of Moab," and the time, the last days of Moses, or about 1450 B. C.

DEUTERONOMY.

Deuteronomy signifies the "second law." This does not mean that the Pentateuch contains two separate and distinct laws, the first

being abrogated by the second, but rather, a repetition of the law Deuteronomy is, in a sense, an epitomé of what is elsewhere recorded concerning God's dealings with the Israelites. By comparing Chapter i., 5, with Chapter xxxiv., 1, this book, like Numbers, appears to have been written by Moses in the plains of Moab near the end of his life. Chapter xxxiv., the last chapter contains an account of the death of Moses; verses 5-12. But this is no argument against the Mosaic authorship. The account of his death, or the whole of Chapter xxxiv., was added to the book after his death. The persons named as the probable authors of this last chapter are Joshua, Samuel, and Ezra.

JOSHUA.

This book follows the Pentateuch, and very naturally so, since Joshua, whose name it bears, was the successor of Moses, and also, the book is devoted principally to a record of the work and achievements of Joshua, as the leader of the Israelitish people after the death of Moses. As in many other cases, the date and authorship are in doubt; at least, critics differ with regard to them. It is sometimes referred to as a contin-

nation of the book of Deuteronomy, and therefore, in a sense, a part of the Pentateuch. But, from the earliest times, it has maintained its place in the sacred canon as a separate and distinct book. Its antiquity and authenticity—truthfulness—are vouched for by a Phœnician inscription which contains these words: “We are they who flee from the face of Jesus the robber, the Son of None.” The word Jesus is the Greek name for Joshua. The book covers a period of from fifteen to twenty-five years. If Joshua be the author, the part of the book which records his death was, of course, written by some one else, as in the case of Moses. The following divisions have been suggested as a convenience to the student:

1. The history of the occupation of Canaan by the Israelites ; Chapters i.–xii.

2. The division of the territory that was acquired by war ; Chapters xiii.–xxii.

3. The assembling of the people; last address of Joshua, his death and burial ; Chapters xxiii.–xxiv. The date has been placed at B. C. 1451 to 1427.

THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

After the death of Joshua, Israel was without a leader ; see Judges i., 1. A number of individuals called "Judges" exercised authority from time to time, hence the name of the book in which their services are recorded. If Samuel may be regarded as one of the Judges, there were fourteen in all, as follows : Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah and Barak—both included in one reign—Gideon, Tola, Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, Samson, Eli and Samuel.

After the death of their great leaders, Moses and Joshua, the Israelites became more and more careless in their religious life, and even went so far as to inter-marry with the natives of Canaan, and participate with them in the worship of idols. The Moabites, Midianites, Philistines and others became at times too powerful for them, and would come upon them in wars and dispossess them of their inheritance. But when they would repent and turn to the Lord, He would raise up for them a deliverer, who would become their Judge during his natural life. If we place the death of Joshua at 1426 B. C., and the inauguration of Saul, the first

king of Israel, at 1056, we have 370 years included in this period. There are different opinions held as to the authorship, but it seems most probable that it was written by Samuel. The history is most important, and shows what Moses and Joshua predicted would come to pass, if the people forsook the God of their fathers, really happened. It also reveals the patience of God in dealing with His people.

THE BOOK OF RUTH.

This book has been referred to as a sort of appendix to the book of Judges, and an introduction to the books of Samuel. Such a reference is not entirely out of place.

It introduces Ruth, the Moabitess, into the family of Israel. This event of itself is sufficient to be given a separate place in Bible history, because from her descended the Saviour of the world, from the tribe of Judah, through the house of David. By comparing Ruth i., 1, with Judges vi., 3-6, it seems probable that it was written during the reign of Gideon, whose judgeship began about 1209 B. C. At least, the history most likely belongs to this period. The

author is not definitely known. It has been ascribed to Hezekiah, Ezra and Samuel. We rather incline to the opinion that Samuel was the author ; read Ruth iv., 18-22, and compare it with Matthew i., 5, 6, and see how the genealogy of Christ was recorded and preserved. The contents of the book are an account of Naomi, who went with her husband, Elimelech, from Canaan into the country of Moab. The marriage and death of her sons, death of her husband. Her return to her home and kindred. Interview of Boaz with Ruth. Their marriage. The birth of Obed, son of Boaz and Ruth, father of Jesse and grandfather of David. On account of the lineal descent of Christ, both Jew and Gentile can properly claim Him as their representative and Saviour.

THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL.

In our English Bible, we have first and second Samuel, but in the Jewish canon of Scripture, these two books form but one. The same is true of the Kings and Chronicles. At the close of First Chronicles, Chapter xxix., verse 29, we have this record : "Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written

in the books of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer." In the light of this passage, there need be no difficulty in determining how Samuel could be the author. It seems quite clear that he wrote the first part of the book—or books—and the latter was written by Nathan and Gad, and the history of the times continued; though the whole book bears his name. His great prominence as a judge and prophet would be sufficient to accord him such distinction. The first twelve chapters of I. Samuel are devoted to the period that belongs to the reign of the judges, that which follows gives an account of the reign of King Saul, concluding with his tragic death on Mount Gilboa. The second division of this book takes up the reign of David, second king of Israel, and embraces a period of about forty years. The whole book seems to fit in the period from 1171 B. C. to 1015, and covers 156 years.

THE BOOKS OF KINGS.

These two books continue the history that was begun in the books of Samuel, especially that

which follows in the first twelve chapters of I. Samuel. The history contained herein is that of the death of David and the inauguration of Solomon. The division of the kingdom through the indiscretion of Rehoboam. The decline of the Jewish estate, and the final overthrow of both the kingdom of Israel and that of Judah, as they were called after the division. The author of these books was probably Ezra, though David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Nathan, Gad and others have been named as probable authors, at least of certain portions of them. The history contained in these books is of the greatest importance to the Bible student. The life and times of Elijah and his successor, Elisha, are recorded in them. The historical value of these books is made apparent from the fact that our Lord cites certain facts that they record. Read Luke iv., 25-27, and compare it with I. Kings xvii., 9, xviii., 1, and II. Kings v., 14.

Probable date, from 1015 B. C. to 588, covering a period of 427 years.

THE BOOKS OF CHRONICLES.

As we have said elsewhere, these two books were originally one in the Jewish canon of Scrip-

tures, though since they have been divided, and appear so in the Hebrew Bible as well as in the English. In the Septuagint—the Hebrew Bible translated into the Greek—they are called Paraleipomena, which means, things omitted. In comparing their contents with the other historical records, it will be seen that they do contain much that is omitted. But, there are also some things omitted in them that are recorded in the Kings and Samuel. Their present name, Chronicles, was given them by Jerome, and signifies, a record. The Chronicles are, in fact, an abridgement of the sacred history of the Jews. Much space is given to the history of the kingdom of Judah, from the reign of David—before the division of the kingdom—to the return of Israel after the Babylonian captivity. In reading the Chronicles we find so much of repetition from Kings and Samuel, that one is led to conclude that it is for the most part a repetition of the history found in those books. One case will suffice to illustrate our meaning. Compare I. Chron. x., 1-12, with I. Samuel xxxi. Such parallels can be multiplied, and will be found to embrace the majority of the chapters of Chronicles. But, much that is not found in either

Kings or Samuel is recorded in Chronicles, and also, omissions from Chronicles are found in Kings and Samuel, as we have already intimated. The object of the Chronicles seems quite clear. The record in Samuel ends with the reign of David, coming up to the purchase of Araunah's threshing floor. The record in Kings ends with the captivity of the Jews by Nebuchadnezzar, giving as far as the "seven and thirtieth year of the captivity," see II. Kings xxv., 27. Now, the genealogies of the returned exiles, after the captivity should be looked after, and it is to this work that the writer addresses himself. The first eight chapters are devoted to this work—see chapters—and at the conclusion the writer says: "So all Israel were reckoned by genealogies; and, behold, they were written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah, who were carried away to Babylon for their transgression." I Chron. ix., 1.

There is much uncertainty about the author of Chronicles. The Jews hold the opinion that it was written by Ezra after the return of the Jews from the captivity. The work goes, really, beyond the days of Ezra, but those portions could have been written by another hand, as in

the case of other books which we have already noticed. The period of time embraced in the Chronicles is said to be about 3,468 years.

THE BOOK OF EZRA.

Some hold the opinion that Ezra was originally a part of Chronicles. Notice II. Chron. xxxvi., 22-23, and compare Ezra i., 1-3. The Jews combined it with Nehemiah, and called the volume the first and second books of Ezra. It is generally believed that the author is the person whose name it bears. Ezra is named frequently in the book; see Chapters vii.-x., and the writer "speaks in the first person," as though he was a witness of the occurrences recorded. "It evinces the care of God over His people, the Jews, whose history it records from the issuing of the edict of Cyrus to the twentieth year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, a period of at least seventy-nine years, and according to some chronologers, of one hundred years." If Ezra lived to the age of a hundred and twenty years, as it is said, there can be no serious objections to his authorship. He was held in very high esteem by the Jews, who appreciated his

services as a scribe. The scope of the book may be thus stated :

A history embracing the period between the return of the Jews from Babylon under Zerubbabel to the rebuilding of the temple. Chapter i., 6. The coming of Ezra to Jerusalem and the work of reformation conducted by him. A portion of the book is written in the Chaldee dialect. Time, 536, B. C. to 519.

THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH.

We stated in the preceding chapter, that Nehemiah and Ezra originally composed one book, but even then, they had their separate divisions. It is highly probable that Nehemiah, "the governor," formerly cup bearer to Artaxerxes, was the author. Though, men of no less distinction than Athanasius, Epiphanius, and Chrysostom held the opinion that it is the work of Ezra. It has been suggested that the genealogical table of Chapter xii., 1-26, was inserted by another. He did not come to Jerusalem until thirteen years after the arrival of Ezra. He came with the rank of governor of the province, and held this position for twelve years, and after that he returned to the Persian Court,

though, subsequently, he obtained permission to return to Jerusalem. He states in the first chapter, that certain men out of Judah came to him while he was in Shushan, the palace, and he inquired of them concerning Jerusalem and the Jews that were there. Upon learning that the Jews there were in great affliction and reproach, and that the walls of the city were broken down and the gates burned with fire, he sat down and wept. When he went before the king—as cup-bearer—it was discovered that he was sad, and the king inquired into the cause. He related to him the circumstances, and received permission to go to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls. A convenient table of contents has been suggested, as follows :

I. The departure of Nehemiah from the Court of Persia, with a royal commission to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Chapters i. and ii.

II. The progress of the work and the interference of Sanballat. Chapter ii., 12, to vii., 4.

III. The first reformation accomplished by Nehemiah. Chapters vii., 5, to xii.

IV The second reformation effected by Nehemiah, subsequent to his second arrival at Jerusalem, and his corrections of the evils which

had grown up during his absence. Chapter xiii. The book belongs to the same period as that of Ezra.

THE BOOK OF ESTHER.

This book derives its name from Esther, "the beautiful queen," who is the most prominent person mentioned in the facts which it records. It is not at all difficult to locate it, as to date, in the historical records of the Bible. It has been suggested that the narrative might be placed between the sixth and seventh chapters of Ezra. In Chapter x., verse 2, we have the following: "And all the acts of his power and of his might, and the declaration of the greatness of Mordecai, whereunto the king advanced him, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia?" From this reference, it appears quite probable that the book is really a copy from portions of the official records, and this may account for the fact that the name of God does not occur anywhere in the book. The author, most likely desired to show how Providence came to the rescue of His chosen people at a time when they were about to be destroyed, but did not think it prudent to make

that point prominent by calling attention to it directly. This, most likely, would have prejudiced his case. But no one reading the book can fail to see the providential interference. The truth and genuineness of the book are vouched for by the Jewish people, by their perpetual observance of the feast of "Purim." See Chapter ix., 20-28. The promotion of Esther, a Jewish captive, to the throne of Persia, is a most remarkable event, and that it happened just when it did, can scarcely be regarded as a mere accident. And thus we have in this history another instance of an overruling Providence in human affairs. It is not possible to determine definitely who the author is. Augustine believed that Ezra wrote it. The facts which it records happened in the time of Artaxerxes Longimanus, who filled the Persian throne in the times of Ezra and Nehemiah. The authenticity of the document having been settled, the question of authorship is of minor importance.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

The book of Job derives its name from the patriarch whose life it records. Many critics have doubted the real existence of Job. They

regard the book as a work of imagination, the design of which, however, was to teach certain moral and religious truths in parabolic form. But there are to be found Bible references which seem to favor his real existence. Ezekiel xiv., 14, reads thus: "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel and Job were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord." Also James v', 11: "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy." In both instances cited, the name of Job is introduced as a real character. In the quotation from Ezekiel he is associated with Noah and Daniel, of whose real existence there never was any doubt. Had the writer intended to call attention to righteousness simply, apart from any particular individual possessing it, it is scarcely reasonable to suppose that he would have introduced two real, and one fictitious person.

But whatever may be said of the existence or non-existence of Job as a real character, one thing is certain, the book shows us what men of those times believed concerning the existence of

God, and of rewards and punishments, and of the resurrection of the body, and future life. In other words, it gives us a view of the religious belief in patriarchal times. The exact date of the book cannot be definitely determined, but it belongs to a remote period, and must be placed among the oldest books of the Bible. The following has been suggested as a convenient table of contents :

I. The Exordium, which is written in prose, and embraces Chapters i. and ii.

II. The first discussion between Job and his friends ; Chapter iii. to xiv.

III. The second debate or controversy ; Chapter xv. to xxi.

IV The third discussion ; Chapter xxii. to xxxi.

V The summing up of the argument on each side, by Elihu, who, by silent attention to the whole of the preceding conversations, had attained a more correct idea of the merits of the case than either Job or his other friends possessed ; Chapter xxxii. to xxxvii.

VII. The decision of the controversy by Jehovah Himself from the whirlwind ; upon which Job humbles himself and is accepted, and re-

stored to health and prosperity; Chapter xxxviii. to xlii.

THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

In the Hebrew Bible the title of the book is : "The Book of Psalms," because many of the compositions are songs of praise designed for use in Divine worship. The name "Psalms" is taken from the Greek translation, and was given on account of their adaptation to instrumental music—see superscription to many of the Psalms in the King James' version—King David is so prominent a character in the book of Psalms, that the collection is commonly called "The Psalms of David." It is conceded that he was the writer of many more of them than any other individual, and that in many instances they portray remarkable incidents in his own life. Some of them are prophecies of the coming Messiah. It is not definitely known when these compositions were collected into a volume. It is highly probable that David collected many of them which were extant in his time, and formed them into a book for use in public service.

From a reference in II. Chronicles xxix., 30, it appears that both David and Asaph made such a collection.

No book in the Old Testament is so frequently referred to in the New as the Psalms. It is quoted, or in some way referred to by our Lord and His apostles more than fifty times. This collection was held in such high esteem in the early ages of the Christian Church, that many committed the whole book, and recited it from memory.

Fifteen of the Psalms, **cxx.** to **cxxxv.**, inclusive, are called "Songs of Degrees," or, "Stages of Progress." It is thought that these were used especially by the Israelites, when on their journeys to Jerusalem to attend the annual feasts, which occurred three times each year.

As to their scope, it may be said they cover every phase of Christian experience. It would require too much space to give anything like a full table of contents. They include prayers; psalms of thanksgiving; psalms of praise and adoration, displaying the attributes of God; instructive psalms; historical psalms, and prophetic psalms. These are adapted to every age and condition of the Church, both Hebrew and Christian.

The word "Selah" frequently occurs, and many readers seem to be puzzled as to whether

it should be pronounced or not. It does not appear that it was written for any such purpose. It was probably intended to call attention to something worthy of special notice. It has also been suggested that it marked the place for an interlude.

It seems quite difficult to fix a date for this collection, but they have been assigned to a period between the accession of Rehoboam and that of Josiah, from B. C. 976 to 640. The authors are David, the Levites, Azariah, Hezekiah, Moses, Ezra and others.

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.

As the Psalms are generally styled "Psalms of David," so, this book is called "Proverbs of Solomon." Chapter xxv., verse 1, reads as follows: "These are the proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah, copied out."

The book opens with the following words: "The Proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel." It is evident that the last two chapters are not the words of Solomon, but the rest of the book was either written by Solomon or adopted by him: As David wrote the most of

the Psalms, so, we may decide definitely that Solomon wrote most of the Proverbs.

The scope of the book is to give instruction in deep mysteries, wisdom and understanding ; the sum of which is a knowledge of the only living and true God.

In the introduction we are incited to the study of wisdom ; then follows the proverbs strictly so called.

The religious teachings of the book are quite clear. Jehovah is recognized as the Creator and governor of the universe, and as He who holds in His hands the destinies of the human race. A religious life is insisted upon in this book, and "the fear of the Lord" is declared to be the beginning of wisdom and the source of happiness.

As to date, the strongest evidence seems to point to the time of Hezekiah. Concerning this, however, there has been much controversy.

THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES.

The title of this book is derived from the Septuagint version, and signifies a *Preacher*, one who addresses a public assembly. The book does not bear the name of Solomon, but several passages seem to point to him as the author.

See Chapter i., 1, 12, 16; ii., 4-9; xii., 9-10. There is no doubt as to the scope of the book, as it is explicitly declared, and is to demonstrate the vanity of all earthly objects, and to dissuade men from pursuing them with a hope of finding the highest good. He deals with the subject thus summarily: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

As there are doubts about the authorship, so there are about the date of the book. Some critics think it belongs to the same period as the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

THE SONGS OF SOLOMON.

This is a poem. Has been called a nuptial poem. King Solomon is evidently the author, as it is difficult to conceive of any one else who could have written it. But this is by no means a settled fact. Perhaps there is no portion of the Bible respecting which a greater variety of opinions have been expressed than the Songs of

Solomon. Many modern writers have entered upon the work of the elucidation of its character and scope, but they, differing among themselves, leave the reading public still in darkness. Some consider it an inspired book; we may safely say the majority of critics hold this opinion, but many others regard it as a mere human production and love song. It is said to be the only remaining one of 1,005 songs composed by Solomon, and it is called "The Song of Songs," or, the best of them all. It is thought by some to have been a marriage ode, composed by Solomon on the occasion of his marriage to the daughter of Pharaoh. It is also considered to be symbolic of the union between Christ and His bride, the Church.

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH.

We are greatly assisted as to date and contents of this book by the opening words, which are: "The vision of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah." Then follows a rebuke to the backsliding Israelites, whom he calls re-

bellious, "sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corruptors," and charges them with having forsaken the Lord.

Some portions of the book have been attributed to unknown authors who lived at a later period, and near the end of the captivity in Babylon. That which gives rise to such opinions is the Chaldaisms, and other peculiarities of style which distinguish those portions from what is generally regarded as the genuine writings of Isaiah. But we do not regard this as proof positive that even these portions are not genuine.

On account of the spiritual character of this book, its Messianic utterances, and prophecies which refer to the Gospel dispensation, the writer has been styled the Evangelical Prophet. It was "The Book of the Prophet Isaiah" which was delivered to our Lord in the Synagogue at Nazareth, when He opened it and read the passage which we find in Chapter lxi., 1-3, see Luke iv., 18.

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET JEREMIAH.

The meaning of the name Jeremiah is—Jehovah throws. According to some—overthrows,

casts down. Chapter i., 10, reads: "See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build and to plant," Jeremiah is sometimes called the weeping prophet, which is probably suggested by his own words, Chapter ix., 1: "Oh, that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears that I may weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people."

A reference to date is seen in Chapter i., 2: "To whom the word of the Lord came in the days of Josiah, the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign." Also in Chapter i., 3: "It came also in the days of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, unto the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, unto the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month."

His prophecies consist of warnings to the Jews on account of their sins, and prediction of brighter days to come.

There seems to be but little dispute among critics as to the genuineness of this book.

THE LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH.

This book is really an appendix to the prophecies of Jeremiah, and originally formed a part of it. Here the prophet pours out his grief for the suffering entailed by the famine, the destruction of the city and temple, the cessation of public worship and other calamities and miseries which were visited upon the people on account of their sins. His object evidently, was to teach the people that their suffering was but a just retribution, and at the same time to encourage them to repent of their sins and turn to God, who would pardon and deliver them.

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET EZEKIEL.

Ezekiel, like Jeremiah, was both a priest and a prophet; he was among those Jews who were carried captive by Nebuchadnezzar with Jehoiachim, king of Judah, and was settled upon the river Chebar in Mesopotamia. He received his commission as a prophet in the fifth year of his captivity, soon after the message of Jeremiah to the exiles recorded in Jeremiah, Chapter xix., which was about six years before Jerusalem was

destroyed. He prophesied for about twenty-two years, probably remaining at the same place. His name signifies, "God will strengthen," or, "prevail."

Ezekiel was contemporary with Jeremiah and Daniel, though the ministry of Jeremiah began thirty years before that of Ezekiel. The prophecies or messages of Ezekiel were delivered both before and after the destruction of Jerusalem. Those delivered before were destined to awaken the Jews to a sense of their danger, lead them to repentance, and warn them against any attempt to form an alliance with Egypt with the hope of throwing off the Babylonian yoke. He assured them, that the destruction of their city and temple was near at hand. Those which belong to the period after the destruction of Jerusalem are words of consolation and hope, and point forward to a time of deliverance and prosperity.

There are Messianic prophecies in Ezekiel as in Isaiah, connected with which are promises of the return of the Jews to Canaan. This is especially noticeable in the last nine chapters of the book.

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET DANIEL.

Daniel is the fourth of what is commonly called the greater prophets. He was carried to Babylon as a captive when but a young man, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, about B. C. 606. He preceded Ezekiel in the land of captivity by about seven years. He was instructed in the language and literature of the Chaldeans, and promoted to office by the Governor.

Ezekiel bears testimony to his wisdom and piety by an honorable reference to him in connection with Noah and Job; Ezek. xiv., 19-20.

These excellencies of character placed him in high esteem with the kings of Babylon, especially Nebuchadnezzar. He lived throughout the captivity, and did not return to his own country after the decree of Cyrus, with the large number who returned at that time.

After interpreting the dream of Nebuchadnezzar he became distinguished as the wisest of the wise men of Babylon.

There are serious doubts entertained by modern scholars, as to the date and authorship of the book of Daniel. Some have removed it entirely away from the time in which the events

that it records happened, and placed it to the period between B. C. 170 and 164. But many others hold the opinion that Daniel himself is the author of the book, and that it was written during the period of the captivity. Dr. Pusey is among those who hold this opinion. One writer speaks thus concerning the book: "This book is the first of a series of Apocalyptic writings which culminate in the Revelation of John the Divine. It has exercised far greater influence on Christian Theology than any other writing of the Old Testament, depicting, as it does, not merely the advent of the Messiah, but the effect and influence of His human existence upon the whole future of the human race."

HOSEA.

The word Hosea means "salvation." This prophet prophesied for sixty years during the reigns of the last kings of Israel—Jeroboam II. to Hosea. He was contemporary with Isaiah; but began to prophesy before him.

By his writings we get a fair insight into the modes of life of that day. The feasts and sabbaths were "days of mirth;" the women were decked with ear rings and jewels. The people

sacrificed on mountains and hills. The idolatry of Jeroboam had produced all kinds of vice; both kings and priests had become profligate. They forsook God, and He forsook them. In their distresses, the rulers looked to Assyria and Egypt for help, and Hosea compared their conduct to the unfaithfulness of a wife to her marriage vows.

The following division of contents has been suggested :

I. A symbolical representation of the adoption of the people, their rebellion and rejection, the conversion of the Gentiles, and the final restoration of Israel.

II. Prophetic discourses illustrated by images of the most vivid character.

The book of Hosea is one of a group of twelve; the collection was originally called "The Book of the Twelve Prophets" These were called the minor or lesser prophets, in contradistinction to the four major or greater prophets. These terms refer only to the brevity of their work, compared with the writings of the other four.

The date of Hosea has been fixed at about 784 to 723 B. C. It is generally conceded that Hosea is the author of the book.

JOEL.

We know little of the personal history of Joel; it is inferred from his writings that he lived in the kingdom of Judah, and prophesied not later, probably, than the reign of Uzziah, which extended from B. C. 810-758, for when he mentions the enemies he names the Phœnicians, Philistines, Idumæans and Egyptians, but makes no reference to the Assyrians and Babylonians.

At the early date of his writing, Judah had not fallen into that extreme depravity, which is noticeable at a later period of her existence; his prophecies are, therefore, rather descriptive of approaching danger. He predicts the outpouring of the Holy Spirit under the Gospel dispensation, the overthrow of the enemies of God, and the ultimate triumph of the Church.

The genuineness of the book is undoubted, and the clearness and elegance of style are remarkable.

AMOS.

This prophet was a contemporary of Isaiah and Hosea. He was a native of Tekoa, which

was near Bethlehem, and inhabited chiefly by shepherds, to which class he also belonged. If the book bearing his name, and of which he was the author, contains the sum of his prophecies, he filled the prophetic office but a short time. It is stated definitely that he prophesied in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel.

The design of this book seems to be to certify to the Jews the destruction of the Gentile nations for their sins, and hence, to lead them also to repentance for their sins. A common error among the Jews was to suppose that they, being a chosen people, many of their acts, though not in accordance with right, would be overlooked. Their error in this regard, the prophet endeavored to correct. The further design of the book was to encourage the truly penitent with the promise of deliverance from the future captivity.

OBADIAH.

The book of Obadiah, in the Old Testament, like Jude in the New, contains but one chapter. Nothing is known of the personal history of

Obadiah, the author of this book. The date of his ministry, between the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans in the year B. C. 588, and the conquest of Idumæa by Nebuchadnezzar, which took place about five years after. The mission of Obadiah was to denounce the Edomites for their hostility against the people of God. He declares that Edom shall be as though it had never been, and shall be swallowed up forever ; while Israel shall rise again from her present fall and re-possess not only her own land, but also that of Philistia and Edom, and finally live under the peaceful reign of her promised Messiah.

JONAH.

This book derives its name from the prophet who wrote it—Jonah, the son of Amittai. It is generally conceded that he prophesied to the ten tribes, toward the close of Jehu's reign, or the beginning of that of Jehohaz. There are those, however, who place him forty years later. The scope of the book is to show the patience and forbearance of God toward a sinful people. The case in point is that of Nineveh, which Jehovah threatened to destroy in forty days. But when

the people humbled themselves and repented they were saved from the threatened overthrow.

The book is divided into two parts :

I. The prophet's mission to Nineveh, and his attempt to disobey and go to Tarshish ; how his plans were frustrated, he thrown into the sea, and his miraculous deliverance.

II. His second mission, his obedience and the beneficial results to the Ninevites ; the prophets' discontent, fearing that he should be regarded as a false prophet.

Our Lord refers to the remarkable events of this book. In Luke xi., 29-32 ; also Matthew xii , 40, which reads as follows : " For as Jonas was three days and nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. "

The probable date is 862 B. C.

MICAH.

The writer of this book, and he whose name it bears, was a native of Morasthi, a small town in the kingdom of Judah. He prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. The date being probably between 750 and 710 B. C. He was, consequently, contemporary with

Isaiah, Joel, Hosea and Amos. In reading his prophecies we are at once reminded of the writings of Isaiah, and the scope of the book seems to be to confirm the predictions of Isaiah against the Jews on account of their continued rebellions against God ; rebellions which were bringing upon Israel the Assyrian captivity, and which finally brought upon Judah the Babylonian captivity. He was a man of tender heart, and mingled with his denunciations many promises of forgiveness, in case the people repent, and earnestly entreats them so to do.

The work may be divided into three parts :

I. The prophecies delivered in the reign of Jotham, king of Judah, in which the Divine judgments are pronounced against both Israel and Judah.

II. Predictions delivered in the reigns of Ahaz, king of Judah, and Pekah, king of Israel, who was contemporary with him.

III. The prophecies delivered during the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah ; the first six years of whose reign were contemporary with the greater part of the reign of Hosea, king of Israel, in whose reign Israel was carried captive into Assyria.

NAHUM.

“The burden of Nineveh, the book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite,” Nahum i., 1.

By these opening words, our attention is again called to Nineveh. The people of that city had repented at the preaching of Jonah, but they soon forgot the goodness and mercy of God, and returned to their deeds of wickedness.

The book of Nahum may be thus divided as to subject matter :

I. The destruction of Sennacherib’s army.

II. The siege and capture of Nineveh.

III. The desolation of Nineveh. The place of the prophet Nahum in history was probably between the two invasions of Sennacherib, which was after the captivity of the ten tribes, about 713 B. C. He is supposed to have been a native of Galilee, though the site of Elkosh is not definitely known. The imagery of the prophet gives his writing a pathetic sublimity that has classed him as the greatest of all the minor prophets.

HABAKKUK.

This prophet was a contemporary of Jeremiah, and his theme the same as his, viz., the captivity of Judah and the destruction of Jerusalem

by Nebuchadnezzar. The book, consisting of three short chapters, may be divided into two parts, as follows :

I. The prophet complains of the increase of wickedness among the Jewish nation. The Lord's answer and announcement of the approaching captivity.

II. The prayer, or psalm of Habakkuk. He entreats the Lord to hasten the deliverance of His people. Expresses confidence in the midst of the greatest adversity. See Chapter iii., especially verses 17-18. As this psalm bears the inscription : " To the chief singer on my stringed instruments," it shows that it was used in the temple service, and makes reasonable the supposition that Habakkuk was a Levite.

ZEPHANIAH.

This prophet tells us that the word of the Lord came to him in the days of Josiah. This makes the date of his prophecy about 630 B. C. Josiah was a great reformer, and distinguished himself by the reformatations which he brought about in the kingdom of Judah.

The three chapters of his book have been divided as follows :

I. A denunciation against Judah for their idolatry.

II. A declaration that if they gather themselves together and repent, the impending judgments may be averted.

III. Prophecies against the Philistines, Moabites, Amorites, Ethiopia and Nineveh.

IV The captivity of the Jews by the king of Babylon is foretold, with a promise of restoration and the ultimate prosperity of the Church.

Zephaniah was the last of the prophets who wrote prior to the captivity. His, then, was the last call to a rebellious people, to whom had been given so many evidences of Divine favor. "The Lord God of their fathers sent to them by His messengers, rising up betimes and sending ; because He had compassion on His people, and on His dwelling place. But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord rose against His people, and there was no remedy." II. Chronicles, xxxvi., 15, 16.

HAGGAI.

It has been thought by some commentators that this prophet was born in Babylon during

the captivity, though this is not certain. Chapter ii., verse 3, may be an intimation that he was among those that saw the glory of the first house. But be this as it will, it is certain that he wrote during the days of Zerubbabel, after the captivity, and encouraged him in the work of rebuilding the Temple. See Chapter ii. The occasion of his prophecy seems clear. Cyrus had issued his great proclamation, permitting the Jews to return to Jerusalem and build their temple and walls which had been destroyed. Many returned and began the work, but were interrupted by the governors of the neighboring provinces, who sought to prejudice the Persian king. For fourteen years the work ceased. But in the second year of Darius, God inclined his heart to reaffirm the proclamation of his predecessor. And so, it became the lot of Haggai to encourage the Jews, which he did, and the work was carried forward to completion.

ZECHARIAH.

The time of the prophecy of Zechariah can be easily fixed upon, as was that of Haggai. They both belong to the same period, and worked to-

gether in encouraging the Jews to push forward the work of rebuilding the Temple. His work began in the second period, or, after the decree of Darius, and the first part of his book is devoted to the events that were then happening.

With the seventh chapter begins a somewhat different theme. The prophet tells us that this was in the fourth year of Darius, while his first utterances were in the second year of this king. The latter part of his prophecies is largely Messianic. Besides speaking of the advent of Christ, he also speaks of the war of the Romans against the Jews.

The difference of style between the first and latter portions of this book, has led some to doubt the genuineness of the last six chapters, but there can scarcely be a reasonable doubt but that the entire book was written by him whose name it bears.

MALACHI.

We come now to the last of the prophets, who made known the will of God to the people under the old dispensation. Nothing at all seems to be definitely known of his personal history, as regards his pedigree. For this reason some have questioned the existence of a person bearing this

name. The name Malachi means Messenger, or angel, which could be applied to any of the prophets. But the greater probability is, that he was a person bearing this name. We can easily locate his work, and it fills a unique place among the prophecies. His prophecies were delivered while Nehemiah was governor of Judea, particularly after his second return from Persia. It may be said that he was an assistant of Nehemiah in his great work of reformation.

After the rebuilding of the Temple and the death of Zerubbabel and Joshua, the priest, the people became neglectful of their religious duties, which seems largely due to the negligence of the priests. Through the efforts of Ezra and Nehemiah during his first visit to Jerusalem, the people were roused from the state of relapse. But after the death of Ezra and during the absence of Nehemiah, when he returned to Persia, they relapsed, hence, the work of Malachi, to call the people to repentance, and to reprove the priests for their sinful practices, and neglect of religious duties. He foretells the coming of John the Baptist, in the spirit of Elijah, to purify the priesthood; and to "smite the land with a curse" unless the people turned to the Lord.

CHAPTER VIII.

INTERMEDIATE HISTORY.

The canon of the Old Testament closes with the book of Malachi. Between the close of the old dispensation and the opening of the new, there is an interval of four hundred years, in round numbers. Biblical historians are not agreed upon the exact period when the last of the Old Testament writers lived, but various dates have been given, from B. C. 430 to 416. The events which belong to the period between Malachi and Matthew are of interest to the Bible student.

After the death of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, Darius Nothus, his son, came to the throne. This was probably B. C. 423. Eliarhib the High Priest, died in the eleventh year of the reign of Darius, and was succeeded by his son Jehoiada, or Jorada. Nehemiah was governor of Judea by appointment of the Persian Monarch. One of his acts of reformation was to compel Manas-

seh, son of the High Priest, to leave the province for his refusal to separate from his idolatrous wife. The date of Nehemiah's death is not definitely known; but after his death a political change took place, which added Judah to the Prefecture of Syria. Under this new arrangement, the High Priest was given additional power. By the sanction of the governor of the province, he dictated and executed such laws as he deemed proper. B. C. 405, Darius, the king, was succeeded by Artaxerxes Mnemon, and Johanan succeeded Jehoida in the office of High Priest. In the thirty-fourth year of the reign of Artaxerxes Mnemon, Bagoses, the governor of Syria, appointed Jeshua, the brother of Johanan, to succeed him as High Priest, but Johanan slew him in the court of the Temple. This act caused the exaction of a fine of fifty drachms for every lamb that was offered in sacrifice. This fine was collected during the time of the then reigning monarch, but after his death, which occurred B. C. 359, Bagoses was removed from the governorship of the province, and the fine was not exacted by his successor in office. The amount collected from this fine has been estimated at seventeen hundred thousand

pounds annually. Ochus was the governor who succeeded Bagoses. Soon after his accession to the throne, Phœnicia, with Lesser Asia and Syria, revolted, and in the eighth year of the reign of Ochus, he came upon the revolters, and carried away many as captives, scattering them in various places : some in Egypt and some along the shores of the Caspian Sea, in Hyrcania.

Johanán, the High Priest, died in the eighteenth year of the reign of Ochus, B. C. 341, after having filled the office for more than thirty years. He was succeeded by his son, Jeddúa, whose term of office continued twenty years. Three years after Jeddúa came to the office of High Priest, Ochus was poisoned by Bagoas, the eunuch, by whom the youngest son of the king, Arsacas by name, was placed on the throne. Three years later, Bagoas repeated the act, and put Arsacas to death ; he was succeeded by Darius Codomannus. Bagoas was still not satisfied with his ruler, and planned to poison him ; but the king, becoming aware of his intention, forced him to drink the poison.

It was about this time that Alexander came to the throne of Macedon, as successor to his father Philip. He also became general of the

Grecian forces against the Persians. With a comparatively small army, he crossed the Hellespont, B. C. 334, passed into Asia and defeated the army of Darius at the river Granicus.

The following year, Darius, with an army of 600,000, again met Alexander, and was again defeated. This last victory by Alexander brought about a great political change in Phœnicia and Syria; and Alexander marched into Judea to punish the Jews for supplying the Tyrians with provisions during the siege of Tyre. As he was drawing near to the capital, the High Priest, Juddua, and the people in general engaged in prayer, beseeching God to interpose on their behalf. During this time Juddua had a dream, in which he was directed to put on the robes of his priestly office, and go out to meet the coming general. Also, to have with him the priests that were associated with him, dressed in their robes, and a large number of the people, dressed in white. Following this instruction, he prepared himself, and went to meet the coming conqueror. He had the city gates thrown open, and met the opposing army at a short distance from the city,

and at a place from which the whole city could be viewed. The way the Greek general received him was a surprise to all, for he showed him great reverence. Parmenio, Alexander's friend, inquired of him the cause of such respect and homage; he informed him that it was not offered to the High Priest, but to God, who, in a vision at Dio, in Macedonia, had shown him this same person who appeared to him and promised him the empire of Persia. He then accompanied the High Priest into the city, and with him offered sacrifice to God in the Temple. Juddua, the priest, then showed Alexander the prophecies of Daniel, which predicted the overthrow of the Persian Empire by a Grecian king. He confidently believed that he was the person to whom the prophecies referred, and went forth to witness their fulfilment. He was lenient with the Jews, and did not interfere with them in the exercise of their religion. He also granted them exemption from the payment of tribute every seventh year. With the Jews, every seventh year was kept as a Sabbath unto the Lord, and their land had rest. According to their law, they were neither to sow nor reap. This release from tribute every seventh year was really a

recognition of their religion, and was, doubtless, granted through the interposition of Juddua, the High Priest.

Leaving Judea, Alexander invaded Egypt, where he built the city of Alexandria, and settled many Jews there, granting them all the privileges of his Macedonian subjects. The great success of the Greek general had, by this time, caused consternation at the Persian Court, and repeated overtures for peace were made, but were refused. In the following year Alexander marched against Darius, and at Arbeld, fought a decisive battle, in which Darius, with an army of 1,100,000 men, was defeated.

Soon afterwards Darius, who had fled for his life, was assassinated by Bessus. Alexander had now conquered the Persians and completely overthrown their empire; thus were fulfilled the prophecies of Daniel. This being accomplished, he continued his conquest from the Euphrates to Indus, and from the Caspian Sea to the Southern Ocean. He was twenty when he ascended the throne, and in six years he was master of the world. His reign, however, was destined to be of short duration, for six years afterwards he died at Babylon, either from poison, or as the

result of an intemperate life. This brings us to 323 B. C.

After the death of Alexander, his family was exterminated and his empire divided among four of his generals. Palestine, with Cœlo-Syria and Phœnicia, fell to Laomedan, but he was deprived of a part of it by Ptolemy, who had Egypt and Lybia as his portion. Onias, the son of Juddua, was High Priest, and he influenced the Jews to refuse submission to Ptolemy, as they were under oath of allegiance to Laomedan. This brought on another war. Ptolemy marched into Judea, took Jerusalem, and carried off 100,000 Jewish captives to Egypt, B. C. 320. On account of their loyalty, he was kind to them, and promoted many of them to positions of trust and profit. This induced many others to leave their native home and come to Egypt.

In the year B. C. 314 Antagonus deprived Ptolemy of Judea, Cœlo-Syria and Phœnicia, but in B. C. 312 he regained them. B. C. 292, Simon the Just died, and his brother Eleazor succeeded him as High Priest. The work of completing the Old Testament canon is ascribed to Simon the Just.

In the year B. C. 284, Ptolemy Philadelphus succeeded his father on the throne of Egypt. He was also generously disposed toward the Jews. It was during his reign, and at his instance, that the Septuagint was made, viz., the translation of the Old Testament from the Hebrew into Greek. This was a most important event. The result was, a general diffusion of Scriptural knowledge, and a means of preserving the Old Testament Scriptures.

Antiochus Theos, son of Antiochus Soter, succeeded his father on the throne of Syria, B. C. 261. There was continued war between him and Ptolemy Philadelphus, which was finally brought to a close by a compromise effected by a treaty of marriage. Antiochus was to divorce his wife, Laodice, and marry Berenice, the daughter of Ptolemy. Two years afterwards Ptolemy died, and Antiochus put away Berenice and took his own wife Laodice again. She was apprehensive, however, that something of the kind might occur again. So she poisoned Antiochus, slew Berenice, with her son and all the Egyptian attendants, and put her own son, Calinicus, on the throne. Ptolemy Energetes succeeded his father on the throne of Egypt, and avenged the death

of his sister, Berenice, by slaying Laodice. He made a tour of Syria and Cilicia, subduing them, and on his return, he passed through Judea and offered sacrifices in Jerusalem, acknowledging that, through the God of the Israelites he had been successful.

The Jews were subject to Ptolemy. Judea was taxed annually the sum of twenty talents. At this time Onias II. was High Priest. He concluded to withhold this tribute, which would have proved a very disastrous thing. His nephew, Joseph, interposed, and through him the danger was averted.

In this period, several political changes occurred by the victory or defeat of contending parties. In about 217 B. C. Ptolemy Philopater defeated the forces of Antiochus and forced him to retreat to Antioch. Antiochus had taken many cities by force, and when he was defeated and driven back those cities welcomed Ptolemy, and promised him allegiance. Coming to Jerusalem, he offered sacrifice and made valuable presents to the Temple. He expressed a desire to enter the Most Holy Place, which Simon, the High Priest, objected to. This enraged him, and, going to Egypt, he deprived the Jews of

the privileges which they so long enjoyed, had great numbers of them brought to Alexandria to be devoured by wild beasts; but instead of destroying them, the animals fell upon the spectators, and great numbers of them were killed.

Ptolemy Philopater died B. C. 204, after a life of debauchery, and his infant son, Ptolemy Epiphanes, succeeded him.

Antiochus considered this a favorable time for him to make another effort for power; so he proposed to Philip, king of Macedon, to divide the kingdom of Egypt between them. He marched with a large army into the provinces of Cœlo-Syria and Palestine, and experienced but little difficulty in subduing them. But in B. C. 199, while he was engaged in a war with Attalus, king of Pergamus, the Egyptians sent Scopas with an army into Cœlo-Syria and Palestine. The expedition was successful; all Judea was reduced, and a garrison was put in Jerusalem. This victory was of but short duration, for in the following year Antiochus, having withdrawn from his war with Attalus, directed his forces against Scopas, and caused him and his army to surrender. He then regained possession of Cœlo-Syria. The Jews gained his favor by their

faithfulness to his government, and as a reward, he had their city repaired, and permitted those who had been dispersed to return to it. He also confirmed to them all the privileges which had been granted them by Alexander the Great. He gave the province of Cælo-Syria and Palestine to his daughter Cleopatra, whom he had given in marriage to Ptolemy Epiphanes; stipulating that the revenues derived from them should be equally divided between the two kings. After this, he prepared himself a large fleet of one hundred large ships of war, and two hundred smaller ones, and subdued most of the seaports on the coast of Asia, Thrace and Greece. His army was routed shortly afterwards, however, by Acilius, the Roman Consul at Thermopolæ; he was expelled from Greece after losing his naval forces, and was again defeated near Magnesia by Scipio, who compelled him to pay 12,000 talents to defray the expenses of the war. This was B. C. 188. He returned to his Eastern province greatly disheartened; and attempting to raise the money which he had pledged to the Romans by robbing the Temple of Jupiter, at Elymais, he was slain by the people.

Seleucus Philopater succeeded his father on the throne of Syria, and made an effort to raise the tribute money that was agreed to in the treaty of his father. He learned that there were much treasures concealed in the Temple at Jerusalem, and sent Heliodorus, his treasurer, to seize them. But just as the Syrians were about to enter the Temple they became terror stricken, and could not carry out their design. Soon after this, Seleucus was assassinated by Heliodorus, B. C. 176.

Antiochus, the brother of Seleucus, was at Athens, and hearing of the murder of his brother, and the attempted usurpation of the throne by Heliodorus, he applied to Eumenes, king of Pergamos, and to Attalus, his brother, and by flattering words, induced them to assist him in overthrowing Heliodorus. For a prophecy of this event, see Daniel xi., 21. For light upon the history of those times, the whole chapter of Daniel xi. should be read.

Upon taking the throne, Antiochus took the name of Epiphanes. which means illustrious. Daniel calls him "a vile person," Daniel xi., 21; and as he sustained this character, he was called by some Epirnanes, *i. e.*, the madman.

He was forced by the Romans to raise the heavy tribute which they had exacted of his father, and in order to do so, he deposed Onias, the pious and worthy High Priest, and sold his office to his brother Jason for 360 talents. Soon afterwards he deposed him also, and sold the office to his brother Menelaus for 600 talents, B. C. 172.

Following this period, the young Ptolemy of Egypt, through his curators, demanded the provinces of Coelo-Syria, Phœnicia and Palestine, which had been assigned as the dowry of his mother. This greatly displeased Antiochus. He repaired the fortifications of those provinces and marched against Ptolemy. In the battle which followed, Antiochus was victorious, B. C. 171. He continued his battles until he made himself master of all Egypt, except Alexandria. Even the island of Cyprus, was, through Macron, its governor, delivered up to Antiochus.

While Antiochus remained in Egypt, it became rumored that he was dead; whereupon Jason, who had been removed from the priesthood, organized a thousand men and attempted to recover it. He put to death all whom he believed to be his opposers, and became master of the situation.

When Antiochus learned what was going on, he left Egypt and came with all speed to Jerusalem to put down what he supposed to be a general rebellion. He was informed upon his arrival, that the whole city rejoiced on hearing of his death. This so enraged him that he fell upon the inhabitants, slew 50,000, and sold as many more for slaves. He robbed the Temple of its treasures to the amount of 800 talents of gold. He entered the Most Holy Place and sacrificed a sow on the altar of burnt offerings, and defiled the Temple generally by causing broth to be sprinkled over it. He confirmed Manelaus in the priesthood, appointed Philip, a Phrygian, as governor, and placing Syria under Andronicus, he returned to Antioch, B. C. 170. In the following year the Alexandrians deposed Philometer, and made his brother, Physcon, king in his stead. Antiochus, on the pretense of restoring Philometer, attempted to gain control of the city, and, in fact, of all Egypt. He entered the country with his army and besieged Alexandria ; but, being compelled to raise the siege, he pretended to have restored the deposed monarch, and returned to Antioch.

He was dissatisfied with the way that affairs

went, and made another attempt, this being the fourth, to invade Egypt.

After making considerable progress, he was commanded by the ambassadors of the Roman Senate to desist from further hostilities, B. C. 168. On his march through Palestine, he determined to destroy Jerusalem, and sent Apollonius, one of his generals, with 20,000 men, to carry out the design. His orders were, to kill all the men and make slaves of the women and children. The attack was made on a Sabbath day, while the people were engaged in worship. Very few escaped with their lives. The city was sacked and set on fire. The walls were broken down, and a fortress was built on Mt. Acre, commanding the city and temple, that any who returned to worship might be slain from the garrison.

This accomplished, he returned to Antioch and issued a decree for universal conformity to the religion of the Greeks, throughout his dominions. To enforce the order, he deputed Athenæus, a Grecian idolator, with orders to put to death all who refused submission. He came to Jerusalem, caused all the religious observances of the Jews to cease, forbade their children

to be circumcised, burned every copy of the law that he could find, and had the Temple dedicated to Jupiter Olympus. This persecution is what gave occasion for the heroic achievements of the Maccabees. Mattathias, with his five sons: John, Simon, Judas, Eleazer and Jonathan, had found refuge in a town called Modin. Apelles, an agent of Antiochus, came to Modin and tried to enforce the command of the king. He promised to greatly honor Mattathias, and bestow upon him much riches if he would become an idolater. But he refused to accept any bribe, and even slew those Jews who attempted to submit and worship at the idolatrous altar. He also fell upon Apelles and those who were with him, and slew them; and organizing a company, which consisted of his family and a number of Jews, he threw down the altars and idols of heathenism and retired to the mountains. Here he was joined by the Asideans and others, who desired to perpetuate the worship of the true God. Having in this way collected a small army, he came out from his concealment, and went from city to city in Judea, destroying the idolatrous altars wherever he found them erected, and restoring the rite of circumcision.

He was successful in his campaign, and re-established the worship of the God of Israel wherever he came. This occurred in B. C. 167.

But Mattathias, being an old man, could not long endure such hardships as his position subjected him to. The following year he died, and by his appointment, his son Judas, surnamed Maccabæus, succeeded to the command of the faithful and heroic army.

Judas Maccabæus proved a worthy successor of his venerable father. He lost no time in carrying forward the reforms that had been inaugurated. He marched against and defeated successively, Appolonious, governor of Samaria; Seron, deputy governor of Cœlo-Syria; Ptolemy, Macron, Nicanor and Georgias, all warriors of distinction; Timotheus and Bacchides, governors of the country beyond Jordan, and even Lysias, who was governor of all the country west of the Euphrates. He went to Jerusalem, which had been nearly reduced to ashes, and restored the services and annual feasts, B. C. 165.

During this time Antiochus was engaged in a war with the Persians and Armenians. When he returned and learned what had been done by

Judas Maccabæus, he threatened to destroy the whole nation, and make Jerusalem a common burial place for them. But he was not permitted to carry out his threat, for, being seized with some kind of internal disease, he died B. C. 164.

He was succeeded by his nine-year-old son, Antiochus Eupator, under the guardianship of Lysias, who combined with the Idumeans and the neighboring nations to destroy the whole Jewish nation. For several years they were engaged in a war in which Judas and his people were generally successful. But he was at last slain by Bacchides, B. C. 161, and was succeeded by his brother Jonathan. Jonathan and his brother, Simon, continued the war with marked success, having succeeded in getting control of both civil and ecclesiastical affairs. In B. C. 144, Jonathan was slain by Tryphon, and Simon and his sons, Judas and Mattathias, were also murdered by Ptolemy, son-in-law of Tryphon. Then John Hyrcanus, the son of Simon, succeeded to the High Priesthood, and at the same time controlled the government of Judea, B. C. 135. He entered into a treaty with Syria, which proved to be to his disadvantage; but in B. C. 130, upon the accession of Demet-

rins Nicanor, again gained his independence. He subdued several places in Syria, Phoenicia and Arabia, and took Shechem, and destroyed the temple on the old historic Mount Gerizim. He conquered the Idumeans, and compelled them to embrace the Jewish religion. His father had previously made a league with the Romans; this, John Hyrcanus renewed, and gained great privileges and prestige by it. By the aid of his sons, Aristobulus and Antigonus, he completely destroyed Samaria. He continued master of the situation until his death, which occurred B. C. 107, when his eldest son, Aristobulus, succeeded him. Aristobulus took the title of king, and presided over Judea, the first governor to assume this title since the captivity. His reign was brief, lasting but a year, when he was succeeded by his son Alexander Jannæus, who subdued the Philistines and compelled them to accept the Jewish religion. He burned their capital, Gaza, B. C. 97. He also subjugated the Moabites, Amorites, and a part of the Arabians. After a reign of twenty-eight years, met his death in consequence of intemperance, while besieging Ragaba, in the county of Geraseus, B. C. 79.

Alexandria, his widow, took charge of affairs after the death of her husband, and proved to be a wise and prudent ruler. This position she held for nine years, to B. C. 70. Upon her death, a religious contention began. The Pharisees had been in the ascendancy, and had been rather tyrannical. Hyrcanus was High Priest, but was finally deposed by his younger brother, Aristobulus. Aretas, king of Arabia, came to the rescue of Hyrcanus, and besieged Aristobulus in the Temple. Aristobulus called to his aid Pompey, the Roman general, who came, but decided in favor of Hyrcanus; placed him on the throne, but would not permit him to take the title of king; and, besides, made Judea, tributary to Rome, B. C. 63. After committing some depredations about the Temple, Pompey was overthrown, and Julius Cæsar made Antipater, an Idumean. Procurator of Judea, and Hyrcanus was permitted only to exercise the functions of High Priest, B. C. 47

After the death of Antipater, his son, Herod the Great, managed to get the reigns of government, B. C. 40. His appointment was confirmed in B. C. 30 by Augustus Cæsar. Herod was a man of superior powers, but utterly devoid of

principle. He continued in power until the birth of our Lord. See Matthew ii., 1: "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king."

We have endeavored to lead the reader along through the four hundred years which intervene between the prophecy of Malachi and the Gospel of St. Matthew, giving such leading historical events as were necessary to keep the connection between the Old Testament and the New. The facts have been collected from well authenticated history, and it is hoped that they will serve the purpose for which they have been gathered together.

CHAPTER IX.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The first four books of the "New Testament" are called "Gospels." The Anglo-Saxon meaning of Gospel is, "good tidings," or, "good news," and has reference to the coming of our Lord to this world, bringing "good news" to its inhabitants. We frequently hear the expression: "The Gospel of St. Matthew," "St. Mark," "St. Luke," "St. John." This is highly improper. It is, "the Gospel according to St. Matthew," &c. There is but one Gospel, an account of which is given by the four Evangelists; this is understood even when we speak of the four Gospels. The first three are called synoptical, because they give a general view of the life and teaching of our Lord; while the fourth is supplementary and doctrinal. Various dates are given by critics for them; and there is some dispute as to the chronological order of the first three. We shall take them in the order in which they occur in the English Bible.

ST. MATTHEW.

The call of St. Matthew is recorded in Matthew ix., 9; Mark ii., 14; and Luke v., 27. The same person is evidently meant, from the circumstances recorded in Matthew ix., 2-9; Mark ii., 1-14, and Luke v., 17-28.

In the records of St. Mark and St. Luke, he is called Levi; in that of St. Matthew he is called Matthew. He was a Publican; that is, one who collected taxes and public revenues. The person having the contract would pay a stipulated sum to the government, and keep the balance as his wages. This offered a temptation to be extortionate; for the more he collected, the more he would have as wages; and it is evident that those officers often yielded to this temptation. See Luke xix., 8. For this reason, and also for the reason that many Jews were opposed to paying tribute to a foreign power, the Publican was held in great contempt by the Jews. The very name became one of reproach. See Matthew v., 46-47.

Nothing seems to be known of the personal character of Matthew previous to his call to the ministry of our Lord. He was a native of Galilee, but we do not know to what family or tribe

he belonged. His was quite a promotion, from a despised tax-gatherer to the office of an Apostle. In speaking of the call, St. Luke says: "And he left all, rose up and followed Him." From that time forward he was a constant companion of our Lord, and was among those who assembled in the upper room at Jerusalem after the ascension; see Acts i., 13. Being present with our Lord, hearing His discourses, seeing the miracles which He performed, being a witness of His resurrection, and receiving the wonderful endowment of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, he was especially prepared to write an account of His life and work. It appears from his writings that he was especially interested in what our Lord had to say about a true kingdom, that should be characterized by righteousness; and he gives a full account of those discourses in which hypocrisy and Pharisaism are exposed and denounced.

As to the exact date when his book was written, critics differ widely, varying all the way from A. D. 37 to 64. There are several things which point to an early date, among them the fact that St. Matthew refers to Pilate as "the Governor" while the other Evangelists never

call him "Governor," but only "Pilate." If, then, Pilate was Governor of Judea when St. Matthew wrote, we are obliged to fix upon a date not later than 37, for in the Spring of that year Tiberius, who had summoned Pilate to Rome to answer a complaint made against him, died.

The contents of the book may be thus grouped :

I. Genealogy and birth of Jesus, and the honor and worship of the Magi from the East. Chapters i. and ii.

II. History of the life and times of St. John the Baptist. Chapters iii. iv., 1-16.

III. Our Lord's ministry in Galilee. Chapter iv., 17, to xx., 16.

IV A narration of circumstances, including the death and resurrection of Christ. Chapter xx., 17-xxviii.

ST. MARK.

St. Mark, the writer of the Gospel bearing his name, was evidently of pious parentage; see Acts xii., 12. From a reference in I Peter v., 13, it appears that he was converted to Christianity through the ministry of St. Peter. When Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem to Antioch, they took with them "John, whose

surname was Mark," Acts xii., 25, and when they went out on their first missionary tour, he also accompanied them a part of the way, but left them before the journey was completed; Acts xiii., 5-13. He returned to Jerusalem and was evidently with the Apostles generally, especially St. Peter. Six years later, Paul proposed to Barnabas a second missionary tour; Barnabas, uncle to John Mark, desired to have his nephew accompany them. But as he did not continue with them during the first journey, Paul was unwilling to have him go. After a "sharp contention" between them, they separated, Paul taking Silas as his companion, and Barnabas taking Mark; see Acts xv., 36-40. He was afterwards reconciled to Paul, to whom he became "serviceable;" see II Timothy iv., 11: Col. iv., 10, and Philemon, 24. We find him also with Peter, I Peter v., 13, and it is generally believed that the Gospel "according to St. Mark" was written under the influence of St. Peter and perhaps partly to his dictation. It seems highly probable that the book was written in some part of the Roman Empire where Latin was the prevalent language, that it was written before that of St. Luke, and that it was designed

for a mixed community of Jewish and Gentile believers. After a very brief introduction, the narration begins with the call of St. Peter, see Chapter i., 16, and throughout the history the writer confines himself almost exclusively to such occurrences as were witnessed by St. Peter. This, with other internal evidences, makes it highly probable that the Gospel was written under the dictation of St. Peter, who was an eye witness of the occurrences recorded.

The following is a summary of contents:

I. Brief history of Christ from His baptism to the time when He entered fully upon His ministry. Chapter i., 1-13.

His history up to the last visit to Jerusalem Chapter i., 14-x.

His passion, death, resurrection and ascension. Chapter xi., xvi.

ST. LUKE.

Eusebius informs us that St. Luke, the author of this Gospel, was a native of Antioch. He was a physician by profession, and accompanied St. Paul in the greater part of his travels. It appears from the record, Acts xvi, 10-17, that he

joined St. Paul at Troas and accompanied him to Philippi, and remained there for a time, it is believed, to instruct the converts. Seven years later, we again find him with the Apostle at Philippi, from which place they journeyed together to Asia and Palestine, and finally to Rome; Acts xx : 5-6 and xxviii, 16. There can scarcely be any doubt as to the genuineness and authenticity of this gospel, as it is attested by the unanimous voice of antiquity. St. Luke does not claim to have been an eye witness of the facts which he records, but he made a *careful* compilation of the testimony of those who had personally known our Lord. Concerning this he speaks as follows :

Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us.

2. Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word;

3. It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,

4. That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.

It is highly probable that this Gospel was written in Achaia, and was intended especially

for the use of the Greeks. The writer tells us much of the merciful designs of God to the Gentiles, that the Messiah was "a light to lighten the Gentiles," Luke ii., 32. And that "*all flesh shall see the salvation of God.*" Luke iii., 6.

It is difficult to fix upon an exact date, but it was probably written somewhere between A. D. 50 and 58. The writer addresses it to his friend Theophilus, for his instruction. Luke i., 3. Tracing our Lord's genealogy up to the common head of the whole human race, he represents Him as the Saviour of man, making no distinction between Jew and Gentile.-

The contents of this Gospel may be thus divided :

- I. The birth and early life of Jesus. Chapter i., ii.
- II. His baptism, genealogy and temptation. Chapters iii.-iv., 13.
- III. His ministry in Galilee. Chapter iv., 14; ix., 50.
- IV. His last journey from Galilee to Jerusalem. Chapters ix., 51; xix., 27
- V. Circumstances relating to His crucifixion. Chapters xix., 28; xxiii.
- VI. His resurrection and ascension. Chapter xxiv.

ST. JOHN.

The author of this Gospel was the son of Zebedee and Salome, and the brother of James. He became a follower of Jesus at the very commencement of His ministry, and continued with Him to the end. He was with the Lord on several important occasions when no one else except Peter and James was admitted. His account was written long after the other three, perhaps about the close of the century, and is a supplement to the others. With the exception of the miracle of feeding the five thousand, and the record of the Lord's trial and Crucifixion, there is probably nothing in this Gospel in common with the others. But for his account, we should not have known of the changing of water to wine, the giving of sight to the man that was born blind, and the raising of Lazarus. The synoptic Gospels narrate mainly those events which took place in Galilee, while St. John confines himself almost wholly to those which occurred in Judea. Much space is given to the sayings and doings of the last twenty-four hours of our Lord's life. According to his own statement, Chapter xx., 30-31, his object for writing this account was to confirm the faith of Christians,

“that believing, they might have life through His name.” That there were certain heretical doctrines prevalent in his day, is evident from a reference in Revelation ii, 6 ; these he refuted with apostolic authority. The first eighteen verses of this Gospel are a refutation of the doctrine taught by Cerinthus, who, among other erroneous statements, declared that there was a distinction between “the Word” and the “only begotten,” and denied the eternal existence and supreme divinity of Christ. The Gospel may be thus divided :

I. Refutation of heretical doctrines. Chapter i., 1-18.

II. True doctrines confirmed by selections from the acts and discourses of our Lord. Chapters i., 19-xx.

III. Events after the Resurrection. Chapter xxi.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

The “Acts of the Apostles,” written by St. Luke. About this there is no dispute among critics. In the first verse he speaks of a “former treatise,” which he had addressed to his friend, Theophilus ; this is believed to be the Gospel bearing his name. “The Acts,” then,

may properly be called a supplement to that Gospel. The history given in this book does not come up to what its name seems to imply. The scope embraces, practically, two subjects; first, it bears testimony of the descent of the Holy Spirit, according to our Lord's promise. Luke xxiv., 49. Secondly, it records such facts as prove the rights of the Gentiles to admission into the Christian Church. After a brief mention of the labors of Peter and John, the writer confines himself almost entirely to the travels and labors of St. Paul. A. D. 63 is generally assigned as the date of this book. The narration brings us down to St. Paul's two years of imprisonment at Rome, which ended in A. D. 63, but says nothing of his death, which occurred, it is believed, in 65. The Acts is an important connecting link between the Gospels and the Epistles, and but for it, it would not be an easy matter to determine the dates of the Epistles, especially those that were written by St. Paul.

The contents may be thus divided :

- I. Rise and progress of the Christian Church after the Ascension.
- II. The persecution of the Jews, and their dispersion.

III. The promulgation of the Gospel among the Gentiles.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

It is unanimously agreed that St. Paul is the author of the Epistle to the Romans. In our English Bible, it stands first among the Epistles, though it was not written first, but probably fifth. It was written under St. Paul's dictation by Tertius, his amanuensis; Chapter xvi., 22, and forwarded to Rome by Phœbe, a Deaconess, Chapter xvi., 1. That it was written in Corinth appears from the salutation which it contains of Erastus, the chamberlain of the city, and of Gaius, both of whom are known to have resided there; see II. Timothy, iv., 20, and I Cor. i., 14.

In this Epistle, the Apostle strongly recommends the Christian faith as that which is necessary for both Jew and Gentile, showing that it was evidently written for a Church composed of both these nationalities. He insists upon the common and equal sinfulness, by nature, of both the Jews and the Gentiles, and hence, the need of the righteousness of Christ for the salvation of both. Neither St. Paul nor any other Apostle had visited Rome up to the

time when this Epistle was written; the Church had probably been planted there by some of those "strangers of Rome" who were at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. "Whensoever I take my journey into Spain," he says, "I will come to you," Chapter xv., 24. Its date is probably about A. D. 58.

THE EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

The Epistles to the Corinthians are undoubtedly Pauline. They contain indisputable internal evidence of their genuineness, especially when we compare the narrative of St. Luke in the Acts of the Apostles with them. It is also evident that he wrote the first letter from Ephesus, not from Philippi, see Chapter xvi., 8, as the appended subscription would imply. The Church was organized at Corinth by St. Paul himself; see Acts, Chapter xviii. The city was a stronghold of vice, and it was with much difficulty that Christianity got a strong footing. In his early labors there, the Apostle was encouraged by a vision from the Lord, who said to him, "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; for I am with thee, and no man shall set

on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city." Acts xviii., 9-10.

While at Ephesus St. Paul learned from some who were of the family of Chloe, of certain irregularities that existed in the Corinthian Church. Also, some false teacher in the Church had spoken some things against the Apostle; insinuating that he was not one of the twelve original Apostles, and that he was not an attractive speaker. In the very first verse, St. Paul declares his Apostolic authority: "Paul, called to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ, through the will of God." There were among them schisms and divisions, and great evils were practiced by many of them, even incest in one case; all these evils he endeavored to correct. And besides this, the Church had addressed him a letter asking for information concerning certain matters, as marriage, things—meats—that had been offered to idols and afterwards put on sale in the public markets; spiritual gifts, prophesying, *i. e.*, who were to be teachers in the Church; whether or not women should be permitted to speak in public as teachers, and concerning the collections for the poor in Judea. These questions are all answered in order. It

seems quite probable that the first letter was written A. D. 57, about the time that the Apostle took his final departure from Ephesus.

The Epistle was sent to Corinth by the hand of Titus, and St. Paul was anxious to know what effect it would have on the Church. He went to Troas to meet Titus on his way back, and being disappointed in this, he proceeded to Macedonia, where he met him and obtained the desired interview. Upon the whole, the report was encouraging, as the Apostle himself declares. See II. Cor. ii., 13; vii., 6-13, and viii., 6.

But while the majority of the membership accepted the advice and instructions, there were some who, under the influence of certain Judaizing teachers, refused to submit, and this was the occasion for the second letter, which was probably written in A. D. 58, one year after the first. See II. Cor. vii., 9-16; viii., 7; v., 16; x., 7, and xi., 22, where the Apostle, after his interview with Titus writes again to the Church, commending the penitent and rebuking the arrogant.

THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

Learned men are not agreed as to the date of

this Epistle. Every year, from A. D. 48 to 58 has been given as the probable date. In Acts xvi., 6, and xviii., 23, we have an account of two visits to Galatia by St. Paul, and in Galatians i., 6, he expresses surprise that they should be so soon turned aside from the faith in which they had been instructed. According to the most reliable chronology, the first visit, when the Church was planted, was made about A. D. 50, towards the close of the year, and the second, in 54. If this be true, then the Epistle was written between 50 and 54 ; probably about 52 A. D.

The object of writing the letter was to confirm the Galatians in the Christian faith, as against the teaching of those who insisted upon the observance of the law of Moses. The teachers who tried to mislead the Galatians were of the self-same type of those who troubled the Church at Corinth. The Apostle endeavored to prove that men are justified by faith without the works of the law of Moses. The genuineness of this Epistle has never been denied.

EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

St. Paul was undoubtedly the author of the

Epistle to the Ephesians, and it is also quite certain that it, and some others, were written while he was a prisoner at Rome. The probable date is A. D. 61, though some have placed it two years later. The Ephesians were almost entirely Gentiles, and it was by insisting upon the fact that the Gentiles should be received into the Christian Church, just as were the Jews, that the Apostle had met with so much opposition from his own kinsmen. Now, being in prison and unable to visit them, and confirm them in the faith, he wrote this letter. The first three chapters are doctrinal, the last three practical, except the concluding words, which occupy the last four verses.

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

There is no doubt about the authorship of this Epistle. St. Paul established the Church at Philippi about A. D. 50, and in 57 he again visited the city. See Acts xx., 6. Of all the churches planted by St. Paul, none seems to have had such affectionate regard for him as this one. The occasion of this letter to them was a contribution sent to him, while in prison,

by Epaphroditus. He gives them the credit of being the only church to minister to his necessities, and acknowledges the receipt of other contributions from them previous to this one; see Chapter iv., 15-18. Epaphroditus continued for some time at Rome on account of illness, during which time another communication came to the Apostle from his loving flock. Chapter ii., 25-30.

But that which seems to have been the burden of his message is expressed in Chapter ii., verses 1-3. He earnestly desired that they should be like Christ, whom he had so faithfully preached to them. Unlike the other Epistles, it contains nothing of a corrective character; there were no errors to correct, no heresies to refute. The letter was probably written about A. D. 63.

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

The Epistle to the Colossians was written by St. Paul, it seems, at the same time that he wrote to the Ephesians, and was forwarded by Tychicus and Onesimus. There were errors in the Colossian Church, which the Apostle combats. Judaizing teachers, endeavoring to estab-

lish the Mosaic institutions, and others who were but half converted from Paganism, and who blended with Christianity, Platonic notions concerning demons. This may account for the words of caution that are found in Chapter ii., 8-23. From the language of Chapter ii., verse 1, "and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh," it appears that the Apostle had never visited these people. The Church may have been established by some convert of St. Paul during his stay of three years at Ephesus; for St. Luke tells us that "all that dwelt in Asia heard the Word of the Lord; both Jews and Greeks," Acts xix., 10. The scope of the Epistle is to show that Christ is the Redeemer of all men, and the only mediator between God and man; that neither angels nor demons are to be worshipped. The writer warns the Colossians against Mosaic ritualism and subtle philosophical speculations, and encourages them to remain steadfast in the faith of Christ.

THE EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

The Epistles to the Thessalonians are generally regarded as the first letters that were written by

St. Paul. The Church at this point was planted by the Apostle in A. D. 50. It was composed of both Jews and Gentiles, but the Gentile element was the larger. For the establishment of the Christian religion, see Acts xvii., 1. The unbelieving Jews raised a persecution against the Apostle, and he was forced to leave the city; Acts xvii., 10. He went to Berea, where he was well received, and there labored successfully for some time. But his persecutors followed him, and he fled to Athens; Acts xvii., 13-15. Silas and Timothy remained at Berea, confirming the Saints. Subsequently Timothy joined St. Paul at Corinth, and reported to him the condition of the work; Acts xvii., 14-15, and xviii., 1. Upon hearing the report from Timothy, he wrote the first Epistle, and expressed a desire that it be read in all the Macedonian churches; see I. Thessalonians v., 27. The object of the Epistle was to confirm the Thessalonians in the Christian faith, and to furnish them with arguments to meet the objections that might be advanced by the enemies of the faith. The Church was founded in A. D. 50, and it was probably in 52 that the first letter was written.

The second Epistle was written, like Second Corinthians, soon after the first. The object was to correct some misunderstanding among some who had heard the first letter. It appears that some understood him to mean that the end of the world was near at hand, and this caused in them an indifference about their secular affairs. This mistake the Apostle corrects in his second letter, and at the same time he took occasion to recommend several Christian duties. The date of this Epistle is soon after the first, probably, A. D. 53.

THE EPISTLES TO TIMOTHY.

Timothy, the person to whom these letters were addressed, was for some time a traveling companion of St. Paul. It is highly probable that he was one of the converts during the Apostle's first visit to Lystra, the home of Timothy; Acts xiv. He was of pious parentage, and was taught the Scriptures in his youth by his mother, Eunice, and his grandmother, Lois. His father was a Greek, and it was on this account that the Apostle thought it best to have him circumcized. Reared in a Godly household, taught the Scriptures from childhood, converted

in early youth, and having from the beginning the companionship of the great Apostle, he became one of the strongest promoters of Christianity in his day, and a most valuable assistant of the Apostle Paul. These Epistles were written by St. Paul and addressed to Timothy. The exact date of this first letter is not definitely known, various dates are given, from A. D. 56 to 65; but when all the circumstances are considered, it appears that 64 is the most probable date for the first letter, and 65 for the second. The design of the letter was to give to Timothy certain instructions for the government of the Church at Ephesus. To caution him against the influence of false teachers who would corrupt the simplicity of the Gospel by their "contentious about words" The Epistle is almost entirely devoted to instructions relating to the affairs of the Ephesian Church.

It is evident that the second letter was written while St. Paul was a prisoner at Rome; see chapter i, verse 17, of the Second Epistle. It has been a question among learned men, as to whether this was the first or second imprisonment, but the weight of argument is in favor of the second, and it seems safe to conclude that

it was written near the close of the Apostle's life, in A. D. 65. It contains a request that Timothy come speedily to the Apostle at Rome; but as he was uncertain as to whether he would be alive when he arrived, he takes occasion to give instructions upon matters that would be of importance to Timothy in the discharge of his ministerial duties. Here he inserts his memorable words, "I have fought a good fight," showing that he did not regret the course he had taken in life, though it had resulted in great hardships, and was about to culminate in his death at the block. His closing words are calm, pathetic and confident, and will always be cherished by the Christian world as a precious heritage.

THE EPISTLE TO TITUS.

This is another one of the Epistles of St. Paul, which he addresses to Titus. Like Timothy, he was one of the Apostle's early converts. He was a Gentile, but was converted in early life to the Christian faith, and became a traveling companion of St. Paul. The Apostle had great confidence in Titus and Timothy, and did not hesitate to entrust to them responsible

charges. It appears that St. Paul visited the Island of Crete, some time between his first and second imprisonment at Rome, and that Titus accompanied him. There they established churches among the "hundred cities" of the Island. But for some cause, the Apostle left rather suddenly, and leaving Titus in charge of the work, he addressed him this letter. This was probably A. D. 64. The similarity of instruction between this, and the first letter to Timothy, makes it highly probable that they were written at the same time, and the Apostle said to both of his "sons" what was then in his heart, and gave them such instruction as they would need, in managing the affairs of the churches committed to them. As to scope, this Epistle does not differ materially from the first to Timothy.

THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

This brief Epistle is self explanatory. It was written by St. Paul while a prisoner at Rome, and it is almost certain that it was during his first imprisonment, and at the same time that those of the Ephesians and Colossians were written, about A. D. 61 to 63. It is ad-

dressed to Philemon a Gentile, a resident of Colosse, and one of the Apostle's converts. The letter is concerning one Onesimus, a slave of Philemon, who had wronged his master and run away to Rome. While there, he also became a convert to Christianity under the Apostle. Having learned of his previous relation to Philemon, St. Paul determined to send him back to Philemon with a letter, pleading that he be forgiven and received, "not now as a bondman, but above a bondman, a brother beloved;" see verse 16. The Apostle addresses the ex-master with much warmth of affection and delicacy, but insists upon full and complete forgiveness for the ex-slave, and restoration to confidence and trust in his new relation.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

Concerning the authorship of this Epistle, considerable difference of opinion has existed among learned men. Some ascribe it to St. Luke, some to Clement of Rome, and some to Apollos. But by far the greater number believe it to be the work of St. Paul. It is addressed to believing Jews, perhaps, those that

are "scattered," or those only who were still in Judea. St. Peter writes to the same class of persons, and in his second letter, iii. Chapter, verses 15-17, he speaks of the Epistles of St. Paul, and says: "Our beloved brother, Paul, also according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you." Mark the language, "hath written unto *you*." It seems, then, as this is the only Epistle of St. Paul that is addressed to believing Jews, it must be that to which St. Peter refers. He says in the verses cited, that St. Paul has written to them upon the same subjects which he himself discusses. If we compare II. Peter with Hebrews, Chapters i.-x., we shall discover that the same subjects are treated. In Romans x., 1, St. Paul says: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." Since then, he is so intensely interested in their salvation, it seems highly probable that he would make some special effort to save them.

The object of this Epistle was to prevent those to whom it was addressed from falling back into Judaism. He acknowledges the importance of the work of Moses as a divinely commissioned lawgiver, and the value of the Mosaic dispensa-

tion, but insists in unmistakable language that the Old dispensation was to give place to the New, in which Christ alone is the High Priest and lawgiver. From Chapter xiii., verses 19, 23-24, it appears that the writer was in captivity, but expecting to be released. If, then, it was written by St. Paul, which we think highly probable, it was evidently during his first imprisonment at Rome.

Having finished the Epistles of St. Paul, we come to the other Apostolic letters, the first of which is the General Epistle of St. James.

There were two disciples of our Lord by the name of James. One was the son of Zebedee, who was put to death by Herod Agrippa, A. D. 44. As the Epistle contains passages which refer to a later date, it could not have been written by him. The author of the Epistle, then, is James the less, the son of Alphaeus. It is he who became the Bishop of the Church in Jerusalem, and presided at the celebrated council held there, A. D. 49. See Acts xv.

The date of the Epistle is generally considered to be A. D. 61.

The design of the Epistle is quite clear, and was to correct those errors, both in doctrine and practice into which many Jewish Christians had fallen, and to encourage those who were steadfast, and establish them in the faith.

This Epistle is not especially doctrinal, but is of a highly practical nature, dealing with those subjects that are well adapted to an everyday Christian life.

THE EPISTLES OF ST. PETER.

There are two Epistles bearing the name of St. Peter. The genuineness of the first has never been disputed, but considerable doubt has been entertained concerning the second,

It is addressed to the "Sojourners of the Dispersion scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia." While some think that this Epistle was written as early as A. D. 48, the date generally assigned to it is about 63 or 64. The Epistle appears to have been written from Babylon; see Chapter v., 13.

The design of this letter was to encourage the Jewish Christians under the persecutions and trials to which they were subjected. The Apostle

exhorts them to patience, meekness and steadfastness; and assures them that out of these afflictions would come great spiritual benefits.

The Second Epistle was evidently written about A. D. 65. The Apostle was an old man, and drawing near the end of his life; see Chapter i., 14. The genuineness and divine authority of this Epistle have not been subjected to a great degree of controversy since the fourth century; previous to this some doubts were entertained.

The design of the writer was to confirm the doctrines and instructions which were given in his preceding letter; to establish the Jewish Christians in the truths of the Gospel, and to caution them against the subtlety of false teachers.

THE GENERAL EPISTLES OF ST. JOHN.

These Epistles are three in number; the first contains five chapters, the second but one with 13 verses, and the third, one, with 14 verses. They were all probably written about the same time, perhaps A. D. 69, though some believe that the first Epistle belongs to a later date,

about A. D. 92. It takes first place, however, because it was first to be received into the canon of Scripture, the others not having been received until some considerable time after the Apostolic age. The reason for this was, they were addressed to individuals, and were kept by them as private and precious possessions. After their death, when they were presented to the general Church, they were not received until they had been subjected to the severest scrutiny and their genuineness placed beyond a doubt.

There is but little difference between the first and second letters as to subject matter. It has been said that eight out of the thirteen verses of the second are found substantially in the first. The first is not addressed to any individual or Church; it is, in fact, a discourse on Christian doctrines and duties. The second is addressed to "the elect lady and her children," supposed by some to mean the Church, but more probably some pious and worthy woman. The third is addressed to "the well beloved Gaius." He is probably the Gaius of Corinth, who was St. Paul's host. The design of the first is to guard Christians against erroneous doctrines, especially the denial of the true Deity, and the

real humanity of Christ. The object of the second is the same; see verse 7. The third commends Gaius for his steadfastness; see verse 3; cautions him against the haughty spirit of Diotrophes, see verses 9, 10, and commends the deportment of Demetrius; see verse 12.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE.

The date of this Epistle is unknown, but the similarity between it and the second Epistle of St. Peter has led some to believe that it was written later, and for the purpose of denouncing the same evils: compare it with II. Peter, second chapter. Notice the warnings by the examples of the fallen angels; of Cain; of the wicked cities of the plain; the impenitent in the times of Noah; of Korah and Balaam. He exhorts "them that are sanctified" to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Like the Epistles of St. John and St. Peter, this Epistle is a strong plea for steadfastness in the faith, and a warning against false teachers.

The Revelation of St. John the Divine. In

this work, we have devoted considerable space to this book, and, therefore, need not make another chapter. The date of its publication has been placed A. D. 97. The Roman Emperor, Domitian, died in A. D. 96, and after his death St. John returned to Ephesus under a general amnesty, and it is supposed that his "Revelation" was published in the following year. For further particulars, see chapter on the Revelation.

SUMMARY.

The Old Testament is divided into four parts :

1. The Pentateuch—containing five books, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

2. Historical—containing twelve books, viz.: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I. and II. Samuel, I. and II. Kings, I. and II. Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther.

3. Poetical—containing five books, viz.: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Songs of Solomon.

4. Prophetical—containing seventeen books :
1. The four greater Prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah and his Lamentations, Ezekiel and Daniel. 2. The twelve Minor Prophets : Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

The New Testament is divided into four parts:

1. Historical—containing five books, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and the Acts of the Apostles.

2. Pauline Epistles—containing fourteen books, Romans, I. and II. Corinthians, Galatians; Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I. and II. Thessalonians, I. and II. Timothy, Titus, Philemon and Hebrews.

3. General, or Catholic, Epistles—containing seven books, James, I. and II. Peter, I., II. and III. John, and Jude.

4. Prophetical—containing one book, the Revelation.

[THE END.]

